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The African Violet Magazine

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Alma Wright, Editor

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The African Violet Magazine

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The African Violet Society
of America, Inc.

Vol. I No. I

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When writing to the Staff for information
please enclose a self-addressed stamped
envelope.

The names and addresses of the District
Directors will be given in the next issue of
this magazine.

Don't forget the African Violet show in
Atlanta October 9 and 10.

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Atlanta, Georgia

Classification: Dr. W. D. Holley
Cromwell, Conn.

Birmingham African Violet Show
Sept. 30, 1947, Sears Auditorium

Violet enthusiasts of the 3rd region
which includes Florida, Tennessee, Ala-
bama, Georgia, Mississippi, North and
South Carolina, are urged to exhibit
plants.

For information write
Mrs. Wm. J. Kiser, Route 5, Box 105
Birmingham, Ala.

The Presidents Message

Let's Get Acquainted!

WELCOME TO OUR NEW AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY

African Violets as a hobby are most fascinating and will give you an abundance of genuine pleasure and satisfaction. As a house plant they far exceed any other plant in popularity. They adapt themselves easily to home conditions and are prolific bloomers.

Since we are living in an age of specialization, it is the hope of your president that this Society will reach large proportions and find happiness in achievements.

For our first year under Professor W. D. Holley's direction we are now making a gallant effort to get all African Violets properly classified. We ask for your co-operation in this great task.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our Fall Show in Atlanta, Georgia.

Sincerely, your president

Mrs. O. E. Keller

Constitution and By Laws *of the African Violet Society of America, Inc.*

Article I

Name

The name of this organization shall be the African Violet Society of America.

Article II

Object

Its object shall be:

1. The purpose of this organization shall be both educational and scientific in that one may be able to enlarge the groups of those interested in this plant.

2. To properly arrange, to classify the many varieties as to color, leaf, character, growth, etc.

3. This organization shall be ready to assist in promoting the growth and to encourage the propagation of new and better varieties.

4. To work out proper methods of disease control and all other matters that may be of interest to the members.

5. It shall hold meetings at which times methods and demonstration, growth and fertilization, and all other activities connected with this plant shall be discussed.

6. Bulletins be issued to the members, and reports of its officers be submitted for approval of the membership.

Article III.

Members

1. Application for membership in the society shall be by written application, and approved by the membership committee.

2. Sustaining members shall be those who are recognized commercial growers.

3. Space shall be provided in the annual show for commercial exhibits so that the public, as well as members can become acquainted with new and better varieties.

Article IV

Dues

1. The annual dues for individual members shall be \$3.00 per year, payable on or before the 1st day of January of each and every year, said dues to be for the calendar year.

2. If a member is also a member of a local society, 50¢ of the above amount may be retained by the local society, and the balance of \$2.50 shall be forwarded to the Treasurer of the African Violet Society of America, Inc.

3. Dues of sustaining members shall be \$10.00 for each calendar year.

Article V

Regions

In order to stimulate interest in local committees, the Executive Committee may, from time to time, designate and constitute certain geographic sections of the United States as official regions. A Regional Vice President shall be appointed to preside over each of these divisions. The states of the Union shall be divided into ten Regions as follows:

1. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New York.

2. Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia and West Virginia.

3. North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee.

4. Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Illinois.

5. Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.

6. Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri.

7. Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas.

8. New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado.

9. Montana, Wyoming and Idaho.

10. Washington, Oregon, Nevada and California.

These ten Regional Vice Presidents shall serve on the Board of Directors of the Society, in promoting the interest in both growing and exhibiting at local and national shows. They should encourage the holding of local shows where ever possible, arrange for staging same, and assist in securing efficient judges.

Article VI

Officers

Officers of this society shall consist of the President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer.

1. These officers shall constitute the Executive Board, and shall have the power to arrange for all meetings, and other matters as may come before the society between the regular meetings.

2. The Board of Directors shall consist of the Executive Board, Regional Vice Presidents and chairman of each standing committee, and shall have general control of the business of the society. Five members shall constitute a quorum.

The African Violet Magazine

3. The President shall preside at all meetings. It shall be his (or her) duty to appoint all committees for the ensuing year, and to perform all duties pertaining to such office, and ex-officio of all committees except the nominating committee.

4. The 1st Vice President shall preside in the absence of the President, and shall at all times assist the President in such work of the society as may be assigned to him.

5. The 2nd Vice President shall preside in the absence of both the President and the 1st Vice President, and shall perform such duties as may be assigned to him (or her) by the President of the society.

6. Recording Secretary shall keep an accurate account of all meetings of the society, also of the Board Meetings. These minutes shall be read and approved at the regular meeting of the society.

7. The Corresponding Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the society, keep an accurate list of the membership and their addresses, and shall notify them of the Annual Meeting.

8. The Treasurer shall be custodian of all funds; pay by check, all bills approved by the Executive Board and signed by the person presenting the bill and countersigned by the President and Recording Secretary; collect all dues and give receipts for same; file receipts and vouchers for all disbursements and shall keep an accurate account of same. A complete audit of his (or her) accounts shall be submitted to the society at each annual meeting. The Treasurer shall be bonded for such sum as directed by the Executive Board, the expense of the bond and the audit to be paid from the Treasury of the society.

9. These officers shall be elected at the annual meeting. They shall hold office for one year or until their successors are elected and installed.

10. Each outgoing officer shall within two weeks deliver to his (or her) successor in office all records and other material belonging to the office, and shall receive a receipt therefor.

Article VII

Nominations and Elections

1. Nominations shall be made at the annual meeting by a nominating committee of three (3) appointed by the President, but nominations for any office may be made from the floor.

2. Nominations for officers shall be presented by a nominating committee and election shall be by ballot. The chairman shall call for further nominations from the

floor. When there is but one nominee for an office, it shall be the duty of the Secretary to cast the elective ballot for the nominee.

3. In the event of a vacancy's occurring within the year, the President, with the approval of the Executive Board, shall appoint a successor who shall serve until the next annual meeting.

Article VIII

Meetings

1. Meetings of the society may be called from time to time in the discretion of the President and/or the Executive Committee, but the annual meeting of the society must be held in the spring or fall at the close of the annual show. The new officers elected at this time shall take office on January 1st following.

2. Twenty-five (25) members of the society shall constitute a quorum at all meetings.

3. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all the deliberations of this society.

Article IX

Local Chapters

1. In order to stimulate the interest in African Violets, we recommend that local chapters be organized in different sections of the United States, that regular monthly meetings or quarterly meetings be held, and that all phases of the growing, propagating, exhibiting and classifying of these plants be discussed.

2. These chapters and their members should be contributing members to the National Society and entitled to all the privileges and publications of the society.

3. They shall be eligible to hold office and to participate in the annual African Violet Show.

Article X

Amendment to By-Laws

Any member of this society may propose an amendment to these by-laws at any regular meeting. These amendments must be submitted in writing to the President, and should bear the approval of the Executive Committee. A two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the members present shall be necessary to constitute any change in these by-laws.

Article XI

Standing Committees

1. The President shall appoint the following committees, to which shall be assigned

The African Violet Magazine

all the duties that are usually performed by such committees in all regular organizations, and they shall serve for one year: Finance, Publicity, Bulletins, Show, Classification, Membership and Program.

2. Other committees may be needed from time to time and these may be appointed by the President or by the society in regular meeting. A complete report of their work must be submitted at the annual meeting.

Article XII Incorporation

1. This association shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Georgia, and the home office of the society shall be Atlanta, Georgia.

2. Charter membership shall consist of the organizing charter members who were present and paid their dues at the initial meeting November 9, 1946, and their names will appear on the application for charter when filed.

3. Additional charter members will be those who have applied for membership, and who have paid their dues by or on May 15, 1947.

4. The Executive Committee shall select a seal, the form of which shall meet the approval of the society, and shall be deposited in the care of the President of the African Violet Society of America, Inc.

5. The society shall not operate in any manner resulting in pecuniary gain or profit to its members.

National African Violet Show

C. J. Hudson, Jr.

The first National African Violet Show, which will be held in the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium Annex on October 9 and 10, 1947, promises to be the most interesting show of its type ever held in this country. According to latest developments as announced by the show committee, there will be a number of most interesting competitive classes which will be quite different from the ones held in previous shows. Probably most interesting will be the exhibit of African Violets in niches.

Heretofore, African Violets have been shown mostly on plain table and step settings whereby individual plants are entered in competition in separate variety groups. It was the opinion of the show committee, however, that African Violets have a different place in the home other than being used for ornamental or window decoration and for placing on various tables, so the niche idea was created. In this group, exhibitors will use African Violets as a predominating feature in the arrangement, but various accessories will be used to supplement these plants in completing the picture. Garden groups and African Violet societies are taking part in this phase of the Show.

In addition to the novelty niche exhibit, an Atlanta garden club Violet grower will make some demonstration displays of Violets used in mantle piece arrangements and also for regular table arrangements. This will be done to give visitors an idea for using these plans for various occasions and purposes in the home.

The general competitive exhibit of African Violet varieties, which will be shown on the step-like staging, will consist of different variety groups. In all, it is expected

that there will be some 65 to 70 varieties on display at this show. One of the new rules developed regarding eligibility for entries in this class is that all plants entered must be single crown plants. This rule was developed to simplify the judging of the plants and also to place all specimens on a more equal competitive basis. There will be a separate class for multiple crown plants where they will be judged irrespective of the variety, principally on the size of the plant and the number of blooms.

Various commercial growers, fertilizer manufacturers, and other business firms dealing with African Violets and accessories and their culture will have practical exhibits on display at the Show.

All African Violet growers are eligible to exhibit at the show and are asked to display their special varieties. There will be classes for all of the main varieties and also special ones for such novelties as doubles, albinos, etc. Doors will be opened on October 8 for the staging of the exhibits and all exhibits must be entered and placed by the evening of that date. Judging will commence on the morning of October 9 and the Show will then be open to the public for two days.

In connection with the First National African Violet Show, there will be the first annual meeting of the African Violet Society of America, Inc. Prominent speakers will take part in the program, and new officers will be elected for the coming season.

For further information regarding classifications and rules in the African Violet Show, write to Mr. C. J. Hudson, Jr., P. O. Box 4088, Atlanta 2, Georgia.

50-20

The African Violet Magazine

Feasterville, Bucks County, Pennsylvania

July 25, 1947

Dear Friends,

May I introduce to each of you, saint-paulia enthusiasts, our HOMING PIGEON Department and extend to everyone an invitation to become an active member in our circular Units? We have chosen this title, as I hope the Organization will be all that the name implies - with letters carried to all parts of the Country by our faithful Homing Pigeon that braves storms and obstacles to return home with messages delivered to one another, safely.

We also prefer this name, so as to avoid confusion when Round Robins are mentioned, as many of us are already Robinites in Clubs conducted by the popular Miss Marion P. Thomas of "Flower Grower" fame.

Our rules will be simple, but ENFORCED.

1. A 3 day grace, from the time the Pigeon arrives, is permitted in which period you are expected to write and post your Unit letter. If this is impossible, please insert a note of explanation and allow our letters to continue without unnecessary delay on their journey.

2. Sufficient postage must accompany the envelope and all Unit letters are to be mailed first class. It is important that each sender records his or her name and return address on the envelope.

3. A courtesy card to your Director is to be posted simultaneously with the Homing Pigeon. The only exception, will be the tenth member in each Unit - that will be posting the letters to the Director, in order to complete each flight.

No fees are required to join and the original letters of each Unit are to be an introduction of yourself, family and town. The letter of each prior round is always to be removed on the ensuing flights and as our object is to be of a constructive nature - letters should be written essentially on AFRICAN VIOLETS, rather than containing social messages. These may be written to one another, personally.

In answer to possibly an unvoiced question - must one be a member of the National Society in order to join our Homing Pigeon? Naturally, we prefer your 100% support, but we feel even tho' you may not be a member now, your taking an active part in our Homing Pigeon department, designates to us, your interest and a probable step toward this goal.



And, I wish to extend to the commercial growers a special invitation!

As you folks write, requesting to become a "Pigeonite", I shall appreciate some data. Please inform me approximately the number of varieties that you have in your collection of violets and the period of time you have had this for a hobby. It will be of value to me in forming our Units.

I shall report the progress of our growth and news gathered from our Units (relayed to me, by YOUR directors) in this column. Will you be looking for it?

Now, in closing - may I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere appreciation to Mr. Arthur G. Chard: 31 Jefferson St., Haverhill, Mass. for his kind contribution as shown by the sketch heading our department. Thank you, Arthur.

This, has been my first letter, in this capacity, to my friends near and far. But, I hope there will be many more to follow. Your comments and suggestions are solicited. Via our Homing Pigeon, I am anticipating many visits with you. So, until we meet again, I am

sincerely yours,

Elsie Croasdale Freed (Conductress)

The African Violet (*Saintpaulia*)

By--Mrs. O. E. Kellar--Des Moines, Iowa

We that grow African Violets are asked if they are in the same family as our wild violets. The African violet or *Saintpaulia* is not a true violet. They belong to the Gesneriaceae family. This is a very large family, 18 tribes and all their families. The African Violet tribe name is Ramondieae, there are five in this tribe. There is only one Specie in the *Saintpaulia* as it is called.

The *Saintpaulia* was discovered in 1890 by a man named Baron Walter Von St. Paul. So many of our plants are named after the man that discovered it. This is the way this beautiful plant got the name *Saintpaulia*. They came from east Africa. They were found in two places at that time, a short distance from Tanga Africa in a wooded place in fissures of limestone rock as well as in rich soil with plenty of vegetable matter. There were several varieties discovered slightly different in color. There was a yellowish shade, this was lost also shades in blue. Seeds were sent to England and plants were raised. When these bloomed in 1893 they were exhibited at a horticultural exhibit. Flowering plants were developed in the Royal Gardens of England. The ones introduced at that time were *Purpuria*, dark purple, *Grandiflora*, a large flower and *Albescens*, a white tinted pink. These forms seemly were lost, but a form known as *Ionantha* and *Kwensis*, a hybrid were saved. It was several years later that they were brought to the U. S.

Many varieties are on the market now. Will there be a yellow African Violet? There are yellow flowering plants in the Gesneriaceae family. It wouldn't surprise me to see a yellow African Violet before many years. There are many seedlings on the market, many alike but with different names. Now with the Society, we hope to get the various varieties classified. This will take time. I have appointed a committee to start working on this hoping the growers will work with us. We have the white, pink, shades of blue and the so-called orchid and red. There are many beautiful leaves, some heavy, deep veined, dark green, purple underneath, the Blue Girl leaf, also the Dupont African violets with their heavy leaves and large flowers. Several different double flowering African violets are on the market.

PROPAGATION: - African violets are propagated by three different methods - by offset or divisions, by leaf cutting and by seed. When the divisions are from older plants that have more than two crowns,

separate carefully, do not plant too deeply, and leave crown free of any covering of soil. Older crowns without roots may be re-rooted by cutting away the older portion of stalk, and re-rooting as you would a leaf cutting. When planting young plants and there are several from one leaf, tear them apart putting one plant to a pot. If the plants are not all large enough put back the small plants in sand and peat until larger, setting them far enough apart. When larger they can be lifted with plenty of sand and peat on their roots.

A crowded pot of African violets will not bloom as well as they do with one crown. Be sure to use large enough pots. They do not like to have their root crowded like most plants. When you by a violet and there are several in a pot, as soon as it stops blooming, repot it putting each division by itself. They will make you nicer plants and give you more bloom.

LEAF CUTTINGS: - Leaf cutting is the most common method of propagation. There are different ways of rooting these cuttings. Some people have excellent results rooting in water, the best way is to cover the top of a glass with wax paper. Holes are punched through the cover so you can put the petioles (stem) in the water, keeping the leaf out

Some use a large pot of sand and peat, putting a small pot loosely plugged in the center, and applying water through this. Some like to use long petioles. By using them you can use the leaf several times. When the baby plant has several leaves cut the mother leaf off and reroot. Others cut the petioles about $\frac{1}{4}$ " long. Many use small pots putting a leaf to each pot.

I find one of the best and quickest methods is to use a glass container. I like a fish bowl or an aquarium and cover with glass. Have your sand and peat moist, not wet, sprinkle with charcoal. I am trying out Zonolite (there are many other trade names) using it with the sand and peat, you have to be careful in watering as Zonolite will hold more moisture than peat. I am trying it by itself, just enough water on it to dampen it, press it down and plant your leaves. I find they root faster in Zonolite altho I have only used it about two months, have nice size plants from cuttings. The glass covered containers requires very little care. Replacement of moisture is seldom necessary until the cuttings are ready to transplant. Keep away from direct sunlight. Vitamin B1 give you stronger roots.

SEED METHOD: - You can cross your African violets to get your seed. In crossing use a plant with good leaves as one plant and the flower of another. I find I had much better seedling from crosses of Neptune for leaf and Blue Girl or Dupont. I didn't like the cross with Ionantha, too many long stemmed plants. I found it takes the seed from 6 to 9 months to ripen. You can let it stand a few weeks. I have planted it as soon as I took it off the plant and had good results. The baby seedlings come up in about 2 weeks. I use sand and peat, press down, sprinkle seed on top. Don't cover seeds. I use glass container covered with glass. When baby violets have three leaves, transplant about an inch apart, still using the covered container. When the plants have 4 or 5 leaves pot as other baby violets. Seed will not come true. You never know what you will get. I have had seedlings bloom in 6 months after planting the seed. The seed is very fine and will dry out so easily, that is why I use the covered method. Have your sand and peat moist before sowing the seed.

SOIL: - There are many good soil mixtures. The one I like is 3 parts heavy rich black soil, 1 part peat, 1 part rotted manure, 1 part compost or rotted leaves. If soil is heavy use at least 3 parts sand. To this mixture add 1-6 inch pot of super-phosphate to a bu. of soil (1 tablespoon to a 4" pot of soil). If you do not have compost or manure add two parts peat. Peat keeps the soil from packing and makes it mellow. Add charcoal if you like, it helps to keep the soil sweet if you over water and water log the soil.

Some say African violets like acid soil. I tried using it with failure, I now use soil testing neutral pH 7 or about. They were found growing in limestone rock. It may be where the soil is not as rich as our Iowa soil, they could be grown in acid soil. My soil tests very high in nitrogen. Most of our soil is lacking phosphorus in Iowa. To get good bloom there should be plenty of phosphorus in the soil. This will not burn the plant. I like wood ashes in the soil mixture if you have it. This not only gives you potash but charcoal as well.

EXPOSURE: - It is the general opinion that African violets like east or north windows. They can be grown in any window. If using a south window watch the sun on the plants, set plants back or have a glass curtain between them and the glass. It isn't the sun that spots the leaves as much as it takes the blue out of the green and you will have a yellow green or faded blossoms. Cold water will spot them if sun shines on them. Some African violets like

more sun than others. The leaves will be darker, where others will take on more purple in a north window. Try them in different windows. African violets don't like to be moved from one window to another so if they are blooming good don't move them. There is a difference in the shade of an African violet blossom when the plant is subjected to different light, also different soil.

TEMPERATURE: - Ideal temperatures for African violets are 60 to 75 degrees, with lower temperature the plant will stop blooming and doesn't grow as fast. Sometimes this causes the leaves to wilt. If the temperature is high and the air too dry the violet will drop its buds, or the flower will fall off some time the first day.

WATERING: - The best way to test your African violet if it needs water is to test the surface with your finger. If it is dry to touch the plant needs watering. One of the safest ways to water the violets is in a dish or pan. When the surface soil is moist remove the violets. Some like to water from the top. If this method is used watch your violet that you don't rot the crown. Some like to keep the violet standing in water. Over watering often results in crown rot. Never water with cold water, very hot water is best in the cold weather. Even in the summer it is best to use warm water. Cold water shocks them so that it will throw the plant out of bloom. If a plant is resting after flowering heavy all winter sometimes the leaves will wilt. Withhold water, keep it very dry. it will start growing after it rests a month or so.

FEEDING: - African violets are heavy feeders. If your soil is rich they will not need feeding for at least 6 months or after heavy blooming. Then never over-feed. It is better to use half a spoon than the amount it says. Never feed a dry plant. Water the plant the day before, then feed the next day. I like vitamin B1 for watering, at least once a month, also for rooting leaves they will have much better root system. If the soil is not rich feed at least once a month.

INSECT AND DISEASES: - There is one insect pest that we frequently find on the African violets, the mealy bug. Apply alcohol using a toothpick with cotton rolled on the end touching each insect with it. Volck is very good used as a spray. This is an oil spray and plants should be kept out of sun until dry. I used this on a friend's plant and they never came back. I have never been bothered with them. Black fly - use naphthaline flakes around your plants or in the dish under the plant.

Some say this is good for mealy bugs. The cyclamen mite, new to many of us is very destructive on African violets in some areas. Curled, warted leaves in the crown of the plants are the best indication of the pest. Hot water bath 110° or DDT spray will kill the mite. These will not control the pest, as they may be on the shelf or window. The only sure control is sodium selenate. Caution must be used in handling this material, for it is very poisonous. This also will control Aphis.

CROWNROT: - Is caused many times by keeping the plant too wet.

PLANT WILTING: - Possibly is caused from over feeding or fertilizing when soil is too dry, burning the roots.

GENERAL CARE: - Give your African violets a bath, using warm water, keep out of sun until dry. Brush African violets, using a very soft brush. Turn your African violets a little each day to keep them symmetrical. A symmetrical one crown African violet is a specimen plant. Cut off all flower stems as soon as through blooming unless you have seed pods. White ring around your leaves of your African violets are caused some time by getting too cold in a window, take out on cold nights.

Just in Brief

By Inquisitive

PLANT MAGIC is the title of a really fine 141 page book by James P. Harworth, wherein he tells in down-to-earth words a great deal that is interesting about mutation. This is that mysterious process of plant life that is responsible for so many of the really fine varieties of African violets we now have, and the many more new ones we will have in the future. Be sure to read this book if you are interested in how the different types and colors of Saintpaulias come about. Binford & Mort, Portland Oregon, are the Publishers.

HOW MANY VARIETIES of Saintpaulias are there? Every zealous collector is seeking the answer to this one, and the Director of several round robins comes up with one answer to it. She maintains, according to our informant, there are more than a hundred different varieties. The fortunate participants in her robins will doubtless read some fine, interesting descriptions of these varieties as the robins-go-round. Perhaps our Editor will ask her to send us a copy of these descriptions for the benefit of our readers.

CLASSIFICATION, in an accurate and straightforward way, of the known varieties of African violets, is one of the long-time jobs of African Violet Society of America. This most important job is going forward through the services of a capable Classification Committee, with Doctor W. D. Holley of Cromwell Connecticut as Chairman. Mesdames Odom of Iowa, Schoen of West Virginia, Layson of Kentucky, Tinari of Pennsylvania, Radtke of Ohio, and Miss Wilcox of Massachusetts are the other members. The Committee is already tackling the job in a realistic way and has produced in a comparatively short time some splendid descriptions, preliminary as yet of course, of African violet varieties. More, much more, about this Committee's work for your pleasure and profit in future issues of the magazine.

YELLOW AFRICAN VIOLET. "Is there such a thing, and if so where may I get a leaf, cutting or plant, at any price" . . . is a question that came to us time and

time again during the past year. Thus far no one that we know has ever had or seen a yellow or yellow-tinted African violet. A plant expert advises that there may never be a yellow one because, "yellow and orange are colors caused . . . by pigments which are totally absent from flowers of this genus." But the mysterious processes in *Mutatia* may yet produce a yellow variety, and all may be assured that the magazine will learn of its being produced and will tell its readers about it.

PATIENCE is a prime characteristic of every interested African violet collector or grower. We are willing anytime to wait months for leaf cuttings to root, mature and bloom for our enjoyment and satisfaction. All this is apropos to what happened yesterday. Special delivery mail brought us two new ones, or at least we think they may be new ones, from a grower in a distant state. When we opened the package the plants were an unholy mess. Crushed and tumbled en route, they resembled a tossed salad that was days old and wilted. Verily, we said, hereafter we will demand that small, young plants be shipped us, because they pack and ship better. Patience in waiting for small, young plants to grow off is infinitely more profitable and better, than a tossed salad of older, brittle plants with wilted, faded blooms. More about this in future issues of the magazine.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP in African Violet Society of America is \$3.00 for all or any part of a calendar year. Check or money order to Treasurer of the Society, 2694 Lenox Road N. E. Atlanta, Georgia will promptly enroll anyone as a member of the Society.

WRITE INQUISITIVE in care of the Editor of the magazine, 4030 McCallie Avenue, Knoxville, Tennessee, about any questions or other matters of interest pertaining to African Violets. Effort will be made to respond to as many of such questions as space will permit in this column of the future issues of the magazine.

The African Violet Magazine

African Violet Widower

Pardon me, did you say African Violets?
Or maybe they're just running thru my head
At home I see them every where I look,
They are even all over my bed.

My darling wife really has the craze,
She has them pink, purple, blue and white.
She transplants them all day long,
And then waters them half of the night.

From dawn 'til dark I hear nothing else,
Its Red Head, Blue Boy, Trilby or Blue Girl,
Amethyst, Sailor Boy, Neptune or Viking,
No wonder my head's in such a whirl.

They're in the bedroom, dining room, kitchen
All over the walls and the floor,
They're even in the bath tub,
Every day brings more and more!

So I am an African Violet widower,
I don't know if I'm a husband or not,
I expect to find myself some day,
Planted in a little red clay pot.

S. B. Jack

To My Violets

You bloom upon my window sill
And give such pure delight,
I never tire of tending you
At morning, noon, or night

You only take such little care
For all the joy you give,
A little water, light, and sun
And food to help you live.

You help me to forget my cares,
And troubles along the way.
So a tribute to my violets
I like you more each day.

M — -

CYCLAMEN MITES

Mite (*Tarsonemis Pallidus*) is a loathsome enemy of our lovely African Violets, attacking the tender leaves and causing them to draw closely together at the center of the plant, distorting the foliage and buds in a twisted curling mass. The center of the plant becomes lighter in color, the buds and blooms fall early and there is little to do but destroy the plant and also the pot. Wash your hands and make up your mind that the next plant you buy will go into quarantine for a few weeks just to be sure.

This is a good time to look all plants over very carefully. Take each one to a bright light, and look for signs of trouble. Should you find anything suspicious, segregate the plant to another room. Wash the stands and any bowls they are in with disinfectant in the water. Next, go to work on the plants that seem alright with a spray, in a room that is airy but shaded to prevent discoloration of the leaves. If you have a spray that has proven to be just what you want then, of course, that will be your preference, if not, I have found "Optox" very satisfactory. Use 2½ teaspoonsful to each gallon of water at room temperature. Spray thoroughly under the leaves and over the entire plant. When the plants have dried replace them in their original places. Repeat the same treatment in ten days.

Be sure to remember the brushes used for the leaves and douse them in alcohol to kill any lurking mites they may be harboring. Dry them thoroughly before using again.

If you grow plants on cinders, rake them and turn them thoroughly, spraying also, then set your pots back making sure the foliage will have ample room to develop and yet not touch.

If the plant on which you have found mite is a great favorite, then remove the leaves after it has been sprayed and destroy the old plant and start all over again with clean leaves. I have never found it worth while risking fine plants for sentiment sake.

Virginia Lee Gardens

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Atlanta, Georgia

Lacks

The African Violet Magazine

VOI. 1, NO. 2

1947

MASSACHUSETTS
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
DEC 29 1952



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When writing to the Staff for information
please enclose a self-addressed stamped
envelope.

If you have had any unusual or inter-
esting experiences in growing Saintpaulias,
the Staff invites you to write an article for
publication in the magazine.

Sorry, but the list of District Directors is
not yet complete, but will be published in
a later issue.

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Ionantha Grandiflora judged best plant
in the Atlanta, Georgia Show. Grown by
Mr. H. G. Harvey, Dunwoody, Georgia.

The Presidents Message

Letter to a Member

Dear Mrs. K.

We are grateful for your recent inquiry, "Received membership card , , , is that all I get for \$3.00, I understood you would furnish some helpful suggestions in regard to culture, varieties and propagation. Please let me hear from you."

You have by this time received the first issue of our Magazine. It will be published at regular intervals hereafter. The Magazine is the Society's medium through which a continuous and helpful stream of information concerning the cultivation, propagation and origination of African violets will be transmitted to the members. You will want to keep each issue as part of a file for your future reference. Here are some of the more outstanding features of the Society's program that will be written into future issues of the Magazine for the information of the members.

Some of the foremost growers of African violets and horticulturists in the Country will be encouraged to write illuminating and interesting articles for the Magazine describing their practical experiences and experiments in growing these, our favorite house plants. This will be done in a way that all who grow them in windows and on sun porches will find both helpful and interesting.

Encouragement will be offered by the Society both to amateur and professional horticulturists, alike, to originate new and richer varieties of African violets both by hybridization and through the various processes of mutation . . . Varieties that will give greater bloom volume, more excellent color, finer leaf patterns and greater hardihood.

As a means of guiding and assisting the members to find reliable sources from which to buy, at reasonable prices, the new and better varieties, commercial growers, both large and small, will be invited and encouraged to advertise in the Magazine. The Society will naturally insist that advertising carried in the columns of the Magazine will measure up to a reasonable standard both as to accuracy in description and represented values.

Something strong and lasting needs to be done in the establishment of a reliable and permanent nomenclature for African violets, because at present some of the best varieties are known by different names in different parts of the Country. Our Classification Committee is already at work and will continue in the all-important job of classifying the different known varieties in such a way as will bring order, in time, to what is now a chaotic situation. The Society's general aim, in this connection, is to see to it that each variety will

have a name by which it is known and that no other variety will be known by that name. The Committee will, in time, establish an accurate description of each named variety according to its distinctive color of bloom, leaf pattern, form of growth, etc. A sound method of registration of both old and new varieties will be worked out by the Society, also in time, for the benefit and protection of its members and the public at large.

The Society naturally views with alarm the insects and other pests that harass both the growers and individual collectors throughout the Country. Dissemination of accurate information concerning what to do to combat and to prevent these pests will be an active part of the Society's program.

The various practical and beneficial processes of fertilization of African violets, the type of soil that they thrive in, safe and practical ways of watering plants both in Summer and Winter, plant propagation both by leaf cuttings and by seeding, and other phases of culture will be transmitted to the members from time to time.

A unique method of communication between members, "The Homing Pigeon", has been launched by the Society through the medium of the Magazine. Then, too, the Society will stimulate and encourage the organization of local chapters or clubs of its members. A number of these local organizations are already functioning and others will soon be springing up in different sections of the Country. These local Chapters provide an interesting and helpful means through which the members in a given community can get together to discuss their experiences and to compare notes. Later on a special section of the Magazine will be devoted to reporting the activities of the local Chapters in all parts of the Country.

The first National African Violet Show, was held in Atlanta, Georgia, October 9-10, 1947. This show, which will be an annual event, assembled the choicest plants of practically every known variety, as well as many new seedlings and mutants. All members were especially invited. Not all could come by any means but all profitted as a result of the Show because of the great interest in African violets it stimulated everywhere.

It is obvious that this letter has outlined a long-time and continuing program of activities. This program will be carried on by the individual and sustaining members who serve as officers and committee members of the Society. They all will serve without remuneration except for the personal pleasure and profit that comes from working together in a delightful and satisfying mutual interest.

Again be assured that your inquiry is appreciated and please give the officers and committee members of your African Violet Society the benefit of your experience. Write them anytime. They will welcome your inquiries and suggestions.

Cordially, ,

Your President,

Mrs. O. E. Keller

FIRST ANNUAL CONVENTION

The First Annual Convention of the African Violet Society of America, Inc., and also the First African Violet Show conducted on a national basis, was held in Atlanta on October 9 and 10. According to convention registration, growers from 20 states attended this meeting and show and all were quite praise-worthy in their remarks about the convention program and also the show, which was held in the Atlanta Municipal Auditorium Annex.

As far as the show is concerned, there were fewer exhibitors this year than there were last year when the show was held at the H. G. Hastings Co. show room, but the average number of plants per exhibitor was considerably greater at the 1947 show. With 77 exhibitors there were 286 plants on display in the amateur competitive section. There were 62 varieties on display in the same section, which did not include the many unusual varieties shown by commercial growers in their special booths. The quality of the plants exhibited was excellent according to the remarks of judges and others, but the number displayed did not come up to expectations because of the fact that it rained heavily all day during the registration time.

Special awards were given to the following for their outstanding specimens in each class:-

Class I Mrs. C. W. Buckhanan, Rosswell, Ga.

Class II Mrs. Pat Crowe, Rossville, Ga.

Class III Mrs. C. S. Raven, 226 E. Lake Rd., Atlanta, Ga.

Class IV Mrs. O. M. Coleman, 1231 Druid Pl., N. E., Atlanta, Ga.

Class V Mrs. I. F. Ferguson, Atlanta, Ga.

Class VI Mrs. Marie Mann, Atlanta, Ga.

Class VII Mrs. John Waetan, Jr., Atlanta, Ga.

Class VIII Mr. David S. Wells, Atlanta, Ga.

Class IX Mrs. R. C. McCoy, 1105 Virginia Ave., Atlanta, Ga.

Class X Mr. David S. Wells, Atlanta, Ga.

In addition a sweepstakes award was made to Mrs. O. M. Coleman of Atlanta, who had the greatest number of points in the show. Best Plant in the Show Award went to Mr. H. G. Harvey, Dunwoody, Georgia; Largest Multiple Crown Plant in the Show was won by Mrs. Robert H. Sommers, Atlanta.

As to the convention, we had an excellent attendance at all meetings and especially at the two meetings on October 9. Attendance at the luncheon was well over 200. Mrs. Robert Wright of Knoxville, Tennessee, Mr. J. W. Good, Springfield, Ohio, and Mr. Lloyd Putnam Lindsey of Asheville, N. C., all gave talks on various phases of African Violet culture. Many questions were asked these people about their experiences and recommendations in the growing of these plants.

At the dinner meeting two feature speakers gave a most enjoyable program when Mr. W. D. Holley talked particularly on the subject of classification and the great need for continuing work along this line. Dr. W. B. Baker of Atlanta gave a most interesting discussion on the subject of a health program for African Violets.

On October 10 the first annual business meeting was held, at which time the various problems in the work of the Society were discussed. Following this came the election of the officers. Our new officers for the coming season are:-

President Mrs. O. E. Keller, 1223 East Oak Park, Des Moines, Iowa.

1st V. Pres. Mrs. O. M. Coleman, 1231 Druid Pl., N. E., Atlanta, Ga.

2nd V. Pres. Mr. J. W. Good, Springfield, Ohio.

Secretary Mrs. Robt. Wright, 4030 McCalla Ave., Knoxville, Tenn.

Corres. Sec. Mrs. Frank Pochurek, 14225 McCracken Rd., Cleveland, O.

Treasurer Mr. Boyce M. Edens, 2694 Lenox Rd., N. E., Atlanta, Ga.

No definite decision was made at the business meeting as to where the convention will be held next year, but this matter was to be left to the executive committee for further consideration. It was also suggested that the Society refrain from holding another national African Violet Show until such time as deemed advisable after more varieties have been definitely classified by the classification committee, thus making it possible to display correctly labelled plants.

by C. J. Hudson, Jr.

EARLY DAYS OF THE AFRICAN VIOLET

by Helen Van Pelt Wilson

(Published through the courtesy of M. Barrows & Co., Inc. who will publish the forthcoming book AFRICAN VIOLETS)

To every lover of green things growing the African Violet offers a constant challenge. It will grow well and bloom almost endlessly under the conditions of the average dwelling, but it will not flourish so easily as to let us neglect it or lose our interest in it. At its best the saintpaulia is a great delight and particularly dear to all of us who need flowering plants at the window to call a house a home.

Some fifty years ago there was discovered in "the hilly region of Eastern tropical Africa" this "violet" which today is the darling of the window-garden enthusiast and the profitable joy of the florist as well. On greenhouse benches and the housewife's sill, it blooms with equal grace, increasing its original popularity of 1893 when, for the first time, it flowered in Europe, thousands of miles from its native haunts.

From the day of its discovering, the African Violet has taken the horticultural world by storm. A leading garden magazine of the time noted; "It does not often happen that a plant newly introduced into Europe can claim the honour accorded to this one of being within two years of its flowering figured in five first-class horticultural periodicals".

And today in America, it is the same. Leading magazines within a few months of each other run featuring stories, illustrations in color, and even place the lovely purple and green beauty of the African violet upon their covers.

Not until the autumn of 1946, however, was there any test of popularity. Then the H. G. Hastings Company in Atlanta, Georgia, sponsored the first African Violet Show and the ensuing thousands of visiting "violet" fans required the attention of the police to keep traffic in hand.

But this wasn't the only time the police had to deal with African violet furor. A correspondent writes of what happened in one little Pennsylvania town: "It seems someone had grown a violet there that was a dirty white and some man - possibly a grower - propagated and advertised it around as a yellow. Now he wishes he had not. The people of Manheim have been nearly crazy answering questions from collectors, in the state and out, who have traveled miles to see the wonder and to buy a plant or even just a leaf of it. Finally Manheim had to refer

the situation to the local magistrate. He posted notices all around town --- "THERE ARE NO YELLOW VIOLETS HERE".

Discovery

The African violet, is of course, not a violet at all even though it does come from Africa and its more usual deep purple blooms are of violet form and color. Actually it is a member of the Gesneria, to which belongs the velvet-leaved gloxinia. It was first discovered by Baron Walter von Saint Paul. His father, Hofmarschal Baron von Saint Paul of Fischbach in Silesia - - president of the Dendrological Society of Germany, a group devoted to the study of trees - - took particular interest in this botanical discovery.

To the publisher of CURTIS MAGAZINE, that enchanting English garden publication which you can perhaps find in books in your library, he wrote:

"The Saintpaulia was discovered by my son, who lives in East Africa where he owns plantations of vanilla and India-rubber trees. It was found in two localities; one about an hour from Tanga, in wooded places, in the fissures of limestone rocks, as well as in rich soil with plenty of vegetable matter. This place is not more than fifty to one hundred and fifty feet above the sea level. The second place is in the primeval forest of Numbara, likewise in shady situations, but on granite rocks, two thousand five hundred feet above the sea. It is much more plentiful in the former place. Several varieties have been discovered that differ slightly in color of the flowers but all are blue."

From seeds sent to England by Baron Walter, plants were raised by a Dr. Herman Wendland of Herrenhausen.

When these flowered in 1893, he exhibited them in Ghent at the International Horticultural Exhibit and they "shared with Eulophiella exhibited by Messrs. Linden the honour of being the two most botanically interesting plants in the exhibition". The next year continental nurserymen carried the seed . . . and plants of this marvelous subject blooming 'in the time of year when flowers are rarest' were offered by L'Etablissement Ed. Pynaert-Van Geert for six francs each.

Flowering plants were also developed in the Royal Gardens of England. The procedure was that prescribed for the gloxinia. A half century later we still grow saintpaulia seeds the gloxinia way but the culture of the plant itself has many a green-thumb gardener puzzled.

Perhaps because in its native state the African violet grows under such varying conditions as "rock fissures" and "rich soil" and at such different altitudes, in civilization it also offers contradictions. This results in one enthusiast's claiming success by methods quite opposite to those of another.

In Homes and Greenhouses

Yet success most certainly is achieved and even under rather makeshift conditions. Indeed, no one can dispute the possibilities of the African violet as a hobby plant for collectors. At least one hundred and fifty varieties appear by name in lists gathered throughout this country. Undoubtedly some duplications exist, although with my own eyes I have seen seventy-four different varieties. These were grown most handsomely in her small house by Elsie C. Freed in Feasterville, Pennsylvania. On her window sills at every exposure some two hundred and fifty plants always offer lovely color.

An acquaintance, Mrs. Paul Dissinger, in Lancaster, successfully propagates enough plants under home conditions to carry on locally a business involving the sale of five hundred plants yearly. In Bethayres, Anne Tinari, the wife of a nurseryman, began raising plants for her own interest and pleasure. Then under the pressure of friends, she commenced selling them. Today in two greenhouses, each sixteen by thirty-two feet, built just for her violets she does a business of thousands of plants yearly.

Pansy Barnes, a doctor's wife in Shenandoah, Iowa, found in her growing African violet venture release from the anxieties of the war years. In time she began advertising and became so widely known that to her door come traveling enthusiasts from as far away as Long Island, New York, twelve hundred miles distant. Mrs. Barnes has even developed certain varieties of her own which, when propagated in sufficient quantity, will enrich the collections of enthusiasts East and West.

In California an invalid for ten years from arthritis, writes, "I have found physical, mental and spiritual comfort in my violets. I raise them only for my own pleasure, to give my friends, and other shut-ins. They help to satisfy that creative urge denied me in other mediums of expression".

In the South, Mrs. O. C. Williamson, the wife of a minister in Charlotte, North Carolina, turned her hobby into a serious business when her husband's activities were curtailed by illness.

I know too one husband and wife African violet team, the Orrells, who are such enthusiasts that they were willing one Washington's birthday to travel from Maryland to Feasterville, Pennsylvania, over icy roads not yet cleared by snow plows just to sit in on a conference of other African violet fans! And so it goes via this pleasant violet path. Women everywhere enrich their lives, bear their burdens, broaden their interests, make new friends through corresponding with other enthusiasts and through visits to clubs, and even develop profitable businesses.

Wholesale commercial florists are also contributing to this attractive plant group. I have visited their collections from Pennsylvania to Oregon and I have discovered that when a grower once gets African violet fever, his feeling for other plants is quite likely to wane.

Saintpaulia Futures

What is needed now is an accurate system of classification, the organization of local societies for study and exchange, Saintpaulias by qualified botanists. In Georgia, committees are codifying nomenclature and societies recently formed there are meeting for clarifying discussion.

Round Robin groups associated with Flower Grower Magazine are pooling information through the exchange of letters.

Some of the state universities have been studying the preferences of the African violet in order to pass on to amateurs a fairly basic set of cultural rules. For this is a temperamental subject. It quite readily offers years of continuous bloom to one amateur but only healthy leaves and not a spot of color to another. Indeed, to each of us who loves it the African violet is both challenge and delight.

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HIGHLIGHTS REGARDING OUR GLAMOROUS PATENTED PLANTS

If you have been hearing rumors to the effect that very shortly, one or more of the patents on certain Saintpaulias will expire, please don't be deceived, for their length of time is seventeen years from the day they were issued.

Pink Beauty's patent No. 514, was the first to be granted, May 5, 1942 - to "Inventor" Frank Brockner, assignor to Holton & Hunkel Company: Milwaukee St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A written permit and labeled tags must be obtained for commercial use to propagate and grow, by contacting this Company.

"License Agreement shall extend for a period of one year from the date thereof or until August 31st of any year, but may be renewed annually as of September 1st by mutual agreement. The same shall not in anywise be assignable." These tags are purchasable in lots of 100 or more at the price of \$2.50 per 100 and these tags represent the Company's royalty. Plant patents prohibit the specified varieties from being offered or advertised, under any other name. "Every plant regardless of size shall have the above mentioned tag inserted in the pot and at no time shall cuttings of SAINTPAULIA "PINK BEAUTY" be offered for sale".

Mr. and Mrs. Public were next introduced to the very popular Blue Girl, No. 535, on July 28, 1942. In this case, Ulerly Greenhouses of Springfield, Ohio, have the honor as being listed her originator.

The next patented plant, No. 597, took a bow on August 3, 1943, and is known as "White Lady". This patent was applied for by Peter Ruggeri of Silver Terrace Nursery. However, it is Fred C. Gloeckner and Company Incorporated: 15 E. 26th St. at Madison Square, New York 10, N. Y., that does hold the Patent Rights of this variety, and is the proper person to contact for your license agreement. All of these legal permits are very similar, and the labeled tags are uniform as to their purchasing price. I do think it advisable tho' to quote this clause: "The License Grower agrees to transmit to the Silver Terrace Nursery, 1700 Silver Avenue, San Francisco, California any orders calling for delivery of Saintpaulia "White Lady" within the State of California, and agrees that no such orders shall be filled by the License Grower".

And now, this brings us to two recently introduced plants, namely Gorgeous and Pink Girl - both originated by R. G. Baxter: 2023 Belmont Ave., Youngstown 4, Ohio. Patents have been applied for and are pending. The name of the first variety mentioned out Ohio way, fully describes

both its beautiful rose lilac bloom and shiny, spoonlike foliage. One definitely nice advantage, that I have experienced with Gorgeous, is that the flower retains its rich coloring even after the delicate blooms have dropped.

Pink Girl makes a charming companion for Ulerly's Blue Girl. Her bloom greatly resembles the lovely Pink Beauty, and might be slightly darker; while her foliage is a kin to that of Blue Girl, tho' more compact and irregularly scalloped. But, unlike Pink Beauty, Blue Girl and White Lady - Gorgeous and Pink Girl will be of no commercial value to people that are interested in either growing them, or for resale, as Mr. Baxter at this time, intends with-holding his propagating rights. Remember tho' they are obtainable at his address for collectors that are interested.

In conclusion may I say a word of thanks to the people responsible for the production of all these delightfully glamorous African Violets? Every home that has them decorating a room, has an added charm! I hope that in the near future, we may be pleasantly surprised again, with more lovely introductions.

By: Elsie Croasdale Freed

CHATTANOOGA SHOW

An outstanding African Violet Show was held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, November 8, from 2 until 9 p.m.

Many beautiful plants and varieties were on display, as well as terrariums, tea tables, and woodland scenes featuring African Violets.

The staging of the Show was most attractive, much credit going to the general chairman, Mrs. R. E. Creighton, and the president of the Club, Mrs. Cox.

Special awards were given to the following:

Sweepstakes in Horticulture - - Mrs. P. G. Crowe

Tri-color - - Mrs. Paul O. Gillespie

First in Tea Tables - - Mrs. Foy Crabtree

First in Woodland Scenes - - Mrs. L. V. Luckadoo

First in Terrariums - - Mrs. G. N. Boyd
Contributing materially to the success of the show, were the fine plants placed on non-competitive exhibit by Mrs. H. H. Fischer.

MAJOR ILLS OF SAINT PAULIAS

Some of the most serious troubles and diseases that attack African violets are root rot, mite stunting, ring spot, and nematodes.

Years ago, the African violet, Saintpaulia, was grown by the Commercial growers and became very popular. Then later it was rarely grown by Commercial growers but did survive to return to favor, with numerous varieties being introduced constantly, many of which are so similar they could be eliminated. It is fast becoming an important crop with many florists and is most satisfactorily grown in the home. Because of the success in growing African Violets under ordinary home conditions, its attractive rich green foliage and profusion of blooms in blues, purples, pinks and their shades, also white, make it the most popular house plant on the market today.

The leaves of a healthy Saintpaulia plant have crenated margins and with the exception of the old mature leaves are soft and pliable as compared with leaves on abnormal plants. Their leaves are a glossy green, the shade of green depending on the variety, petioles and veins on the lower surface are densely hairy.

Mite Injury: As with other crops, the growers of African Violets are faced with attacks of pests and diseases, one of the most important being Cyclamen Mite, according to surveys from greenhouse growers. A large crop can quickly be wiped out by this pest if it once becomes infested. In typical cases of Mite attack, while the younger central leaves are dwarfed and the margins are in most cases, but not always, cupped up. The Mites feed on the younger leaves, preventing their normal growth, the distorting and dwarfing is more pronounced on the younger central leaves than on the older ones.

The hairs on leaves of a Mite-damaged plant appear thicker, and more cottony and apparent than on a normal one.

To control Mite damage immerse plants for fifteen minutes in water at 110 degrees Fahrenheit or twenty minutes at 108 degrees. Always isolate any infested plants until all evidence of the disease disappears.

Root Rot Injury: Symptoms of root or stem rot are soft and limp leaves, very dull green, the hairy surfaces much more pronounced than in a healthy plant. The plant should be removed from the pot, all the soil taken off the roots, if the roots are brown, cut off all roots and enough of the

main stalk until you find a firm green stem free from any brown rings. Trim off the outer leaves, place the plant in a container of water sufficient for the stalk to reach the water. When a new growth of roots is established then plant in soil again.

Stunt: A plant affected with Stunt has the general appearance of one with Cyclamen Mite. The leaves of a plant suffering from stunt are shorted and broader than those of a normal one, they are also brittle and enlarged. The margin cre-nations are effaced or reduced. The margins are rolled upward, showing the lighter green lower surface; this being more pronounced on younger leaves, but in some instances these leaves are almost flat.

The upper surface appears almost smooth because of the concealment of hairs, actually the hairs are there, but only about one-third the length of normal leaves, therefore being quite inconspicuous. Affected plants have pale green leaves and the midvein near the base of the leaf and the uneven streaks in surrounding areas are yellowish green. On some plants flowers do not develop but when they do blossom, the flowers are about two-thirds normal size and have shortened and narrow petals.

Ring Spot: Plants grown in too much direct sun develop bright yellow ring patterns of rather fantastic design on the leaves. If after these ring patterns develop and you continue to grow them in too much sun, the entire leaves will become pale green and appear unthrifty, but will nevertheless continue to grow. If placed in proper place as to shade and temperature conditions they will again produce normal and unspotted foliage.

Nematodes: This disease makes knots on the root system. To overcome, sterilize soil in oven at 200 degrees for one hour, also spray or dust D. D. T., on the pots.

Ruth Carey

Fountain City, Tenn.

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contact

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Atlanta, Georgia, for list.

AFRICAN VIOLET CULTURE

Editor's Note:

This is the second in a series of articles setting forth different methods in the care and propagation of African Violet.

With most house plants one's first question is, "In which window exposure shall I grow this plant"? The windows must provide good light, that is, not too low a porch or too many trees outside. Windows on the south and west may allow too much hot sunshine on the plants unless there is a porch awning or shrubbery. South windows which are not shaded may be made usable by placing the African Violets a little space from the pane, or by hanging thin curtains or drapes to protect the plants. Some varieties of African Violets show preferences of exposure, also. The so-called red violets appear richer in windows where light is subdued. White Lady is said to bloom best at north windows. Each person's home, windows, and the plants he (or she) raises are laws unto themselves. Places in which to grow these lovely plants must be tried, to prove their efficiency.

More important than any other requirements in the culture of African Violets or Saint Paulias is temperature. Temperature of the room must be from 60 - 75 degrees. Any temperature less than 60 while it will not kill the plant will retard its growth so much, that it may take months to recover. Hot air, especially if it is void of humidity, is detrimental to African Violets - causing buds to drop or blight. African Violets must be placed in the room so that no drafts ever reach them. The fresh air that they need for healthy growth may be supplied by indirect ventilation.

Next to room temperature in importance of raising Saint Paulias, is the care needed in watering them. They may be watered from either top or bottom but never with water cooler than room temperature. Cold water causes leaf spots and rings and ruins the appearance of the plants. No water should ever be given an African Violet unless the top soil feels dry to the touch. When water is given from the bottom by pouring it into a saucer in which the pot containing the plant sets, really warm water may be given. The vapors that arise from such a process, form humidity which is beneficial. How much water to give each plant depends upon many things; the brightness of, or lack of, sunshine; the room temperature; the size of the plant; type pot used; and the soil mixture. Enough water should be given to disappear from the saucer in about one hour. This will make the soil quite moist, more so than many other varieties of plants will endure. Unless the

soil dries between waterings, it may become sour and cause crown rot in the plant. African Violets, although so thick and hairy leaved, like a good bath as well as any other plant when their leaves are dusty. After a good spraying, one must remember to keep them out of the direct sunlight until the foliage is dry. Moisture left on the leaves act as a lens when the plant is in the sunshine and burns the plant. This is the greatest argument against watering Saint Paulias from the top.

Soils recommended for growing African Violets vary greatly. I have seen lovely plants growing in rich, black loam and others in light, strawy material. As a general rule, soil made up of one-third sand, one-third good garden loam and one-third well rotted manure, or leaf mold with a bit of commercial fertilizer is most satisfactory. Superphosphate and charcoal are being recommended. Superphosphate may be added to the soil mixture, or dissolved in water and added after potting. Charcoal is used for the purpose of keeping the soil sweet. The amount of fertilizer or Superphosphate to use, depends largely on one's soil. A little experimenting may be necessary. One might begin with a teaspoon of either, to each 4 inch pot of soil, or a handful to each pailful of well mixed soil. If the plants fail to flower steadily, they may be stimulated by supplemental feedings of B1, fertilizer, or superphosphate. A record of such feedings should be kept and also of the effect. Saint Paulias differ from most house plants in that they bloom best when not pot bound. As they increase in size, violets may be shifted into larger pots and blooming will continue.

Aside from leaf spot and crown rot mentioned above, these plants may become infested with mites, thrips and mealy bugs. Rotenone dust or sulphur may be sprayed on the plants and also the shelves on which they stand - or the Saint Paulias dipped into a nicotine sulphate solution several times at weekly intervals, to rid them of mites and thrips. These pests are nearly invisible to the naked eye and may be found on underside of leaves, in soil, and table or window sill where the infested plant has been placed. Some persistence may be needed to rid one's premises of them.

Mealy Bugs may be destroyed by touching each culprit with a bit of cotton (saturated with alcohol) on the tip of a toothpick. Repeat the performance daily, until the plant is once again nice and clean. Another method is to place the infested plant in a large paper bag with 2 or 3 tablespoons of Naphthalene flakes, twist the top of the bag tightly and leave 24 to 36 hours. Repeat treatment at weekly

intervals (never use metal containers with naphthalene flakes). Also use precaution that the soil is not too moist, as excessive dampness seems to form a gas which burns the foliage and may even kill the plant.

Propagation of African Violets may be by division, leaf cutting, or seeds. Any plant with more than one crown should be divided. The extras, all may be planted separately, and any rootless crowns treated the same as are slips of other tender plants. Remove all buds and but 5 or 6 of the smaller leaves, then pot them in soil as recommended above. Such slips must be firmly anchored to the soil with hairpins or toothpicks so they will not topple while new roots are forming. These plants cannot stand sunshine for several weeks.

The easiest and most common way to propagate African Violets is by leaf cuttings. Remove leaves to be used for propagation from the mother plant with a quick jerk, just as one does the bare blossom stems so no end is left on the plant to wither or rot. Leaves root readily in water, soil, sand, mica preparation, or a mixture of sand and peat. When leaves of several different varieties are rooting in one pot they are easily labelled by folding the label over the end of the leaf and sticking a pin through both ends of the label and with leaf between, making only one pin hole through the leaf.

When growth of new roots or plantlets show at the ends of petioles, parent leaves should be potted in recommended soil, anchoring them so they may be planted shallowly. Too deep planting of the leaves makes new plants that grow and develop slowly. These tiny plants will make better growth if provided with miniature greenhouse conditions. This is possible by slipping a cellophane bag upside down over the plant and snapping it to the pot with a rubber band. As the plant grows more sturdy and one expects it needs moisture, a hole may be snipped in the side of the bag so one can put in a finger to feel the condition of the soil. Watering from the bottom should then be done, if needed. When the water rises to the top of the soil in the pot by capillary action all water remaining should be removed from the saucer under the plant. No more water should be given until the soil feels dry to the touch.

Growing Saint Paulias from seed is the best way to get new varieties, as seldom do they come true. It is a rather difficult task and not worth one's bother unless seeds from good varieties may be obtained. If one can raise petunias from seeds, he or she need have no qualms about trying African Violets as the same method

of reproduction is used. Germination of seeds takes about ten days. The little plants grow slowly at first, but more rapidly as time passes and they can be brought into flower in less than a year with good care. To enjoy this hobby to the fullest extent, one should learn to do their own cross pollination and then wait for the lapse of exciting months ahead.

By: Ethel T. Crisp
Dell Rapids, South Dakota

VERMICULITE

Vermiculite is mica heated to such a degree that it pops like popcorn or puffed wheat. The intense heat renders it absolutely sterile and the expanding causes it to become sponge-like, and makes it capable of holding enormous quantities of water. Vermiculite has one other characteristic that sets it aside from other water retaining materials however, and this is the fact that so much air is trapped by the millions of cells, that plants are not drowned out when rooted in this medium.

Vermiculite is sold under many trade names, and as an insulating material. It is generally cheaper bought as insulation and usually comes in bags containing about four cubic feet. Be sure this does not contain any other material with the Vermiculite. The insulation grade is rather coarse, but if sifted twice, once through $\frac{1}{4}$ inch mesh and this again through $\frac{1}{8}$ inch mesh, three grades are obtained.

The coarsest is fine for potting up mature plants and can take the place of peat or sand for making the soil loose. The second grade is just right for rooting leaves. The fine grade mixed with $\frac{1}{2}$ sifted peat moss to compensate for the lightness of the Vermiculite, will work wonders in seed germination. A fine grade, called agricultural Vermiculite, Microgro and other names, can often be bought at seed stores.

The coarse grades can be used just as well for rooting if mixed with $\frac{1}{2}$ peat moss, and this combination is very good.

African Violets rooted in Vermiculite make dense clusters of roots and should be lifted carefully and potted up with the ball of Vermiculite intact to prevent breaking off the roots.

It must be remembered that Vermiculite is inert and that seedlings as soon as true leaves appear, and leaves as soon as rooted, should be regularly fed a very weak solution of a complete plant food to aid growth, until potted up in soil.

Those using Vermiculite for the first time will, I know, be delighted with the results.

Submitted by Mrs. Pat J. Crowe,
Route No. 2, Rossville, Ga.

Feasterville, Bucks County, Penn.

September 27, 1947

GREETINGS TO EVERYONE!

I wonder—may I be allowed to interrupt you, with your daily chores — long enough to indulge in just a little, African Violet chatter? Thanks!

First, I take pleasure in reporting that our Homing Pigeons are increasing rather rapidly. At the present, there is a majority of states represented. I have heard these correspondence clubs referred to, as "The friendly 'handshake' that extends across the Country". And, so — it is with all sincerity that I continue to invite violets admirers, everywhere, to join our ranks. . .

Well ladies and gentlemen, I have very good news to report this flight, and it is the experience that Mrs. Arthur Radtke of Cincinnati, Ohio relates. The story, itself reminds me of an appropriate phrase: "African Violets Vacationing Outdoors". And now — may I quote from her recent letter?

"If you have never put your violets outdoors during the warm months, both you and your plants are missing a great deal. As soon as danger of frost is past, I put my Saintpaulias on tables under a large tree in the yard. The tree affords protection from driving rain and Ol' King Sol. It is necessary of course, that they be screened from all, but the early morning and late afternoon sun in the summer.

The pots stand right on the table with no saucers underneath to catch and hold water. My tables are waist high and the ones I like best have a topping of wire mesh instead of wood. This allows good drainage, as well as free circulation of air.

The plants can be watered and the excess water runs right off. I do find they dry out quickly and need to be checked, daily — except of course, when it rains. But I find them easy to care for out there. In fact, when we go away a young neighbor boy (who has no knowledge regarding violets) simply waters them and when we return after an absence of three weeks the plants are in perfect condition.

This past summer many of my plants in the house and greenhouse (I don't have room for all under the tree) suffered noticeably from the heat, but not the ones that were enjoying the outside. They stayed crisp and fresh. I'm sure if you were to try a few plants next summer, under similar conditions—you would soon be setting them all out. Their abundance of blooms and hearty foliage gives a good recommendation for this treatment." End of quotation.



African Violets are no longer limited to being a hobby with only the female populace, but their winsome blooms are daily winning for themselves, many male fans, too. Gilbert Nash of Los Angeles California, once as an experiment, stored pollen "removing the anther from the stamen and placing it in a gelatine capsule (which may be purchased at a drug store)". He then, placed the capsule in his desk without attempt at maintaining any particular temperature, and it possibly ranged from 60 to 85 degrees. Then, the pollen was used at the end of five weeks storage to fertilize the pistil of a special mother flower that had not until then, bloomed. He also informed me that it is his opinion that pollen (if the anthers were wrapped in tissue paper for protection, en route) could travel even in our letters, enabling friends to cross pollenate their favorites with blooms from the plants that are also especially desirable violets.

And so, leaving behind these two suggestions — I must depart again for a short while. As I write this letter, early in order to meet the press dead-line, the date of our Show is less than two weeks away, and I am all a-twitter. Eagerly anticipating the joy of meeting many of you folks in Atlanta, but, also sympathizing with our unfortunate friends who will be unable to attend, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Elsie Crosdale Freed
(Conductress)

THE CONSTANT WATER-LEVEL USED IN WATERING AFRICAN VIOLETS

It is my hope that in sending in the following, that others situated as I have been for growing African Violets and other house plants will derive some help from the following directions.

African Violets have been a hobby for eight or nine years, grown in a New York City apartment, in one room where they had to be moved nightly during winter months into the bath tub to keep from freezing! Work took me out of the city from one to six weeks at a stretch, necessitating that I leave the care of my plants in a closed up apartment to someone else. As a result, the plants suffered from either over or under watering. The outcome of this was the discovery of wick watering, which, if carried out correctly, will solve that problem.

I have now been living in Massachusetts for nearly two years and several of my violets came with me and new varieties have been added to my collection. Raising house plants in a steam heated house however, brought up new problems with which I was not familiar. So it was a ease of spending an entire first winter in finding out what not to do. A gas furnace and a very dry house with low humidity were the chief troubles. Gas leaks in the furnace (there were several bad ones) were soon sealed over, leaving low humidity the chief bug bear. Daily sprayings of plants other than violets with warm water, were resorted to. Yes, and even sprayings (once or twice weekly) of the African Violet, also with warm water.

The foliage of all plants improved with this care. Towards Spring buds came, only to fall before opening. Determination was still there to make a success of house plants or to know the reason why, so I decided to consult others, including our State College, presenting to them our difficulties. (I had tried the wick watering and radiator pans but we still ran a very low humidity.) Watering by capillarity, other than by the wick method was suggested, and has been tried out with great success. This is called the constant water-level method of watering. I suggest anyone having difficulties as presented above, give this method a try.

This method of watering brings the care of plants and the time involved to a minimum. Also, it greatly increases the humidity in the room in which the plants are growing and especially is the humidity high directly over the plants themselves which is a major factor in healthy plant growth. Humidity in the room in question has jumped from around 40% to 65%, and directly over the plants, it runs from 70% to 80%.

1. Have a water tight pan not less than 6 inches deep with other measurements according to the space into which it must fit. If pan is made from material which is apt to tarnish or create a chemical reaction that might be injurious to plants, the inside surface should be painted.

2. Fill in bottom of tank with 2 inches of pebbles.

3. In one corner, place a small, empty, porous pot (at top of pebble level.)

4. Place 1 inch of coarse sand on top of pebbles. Flood the sand by having water well over it (it is more easily shifted about when it is "soupy".)

5. Level sand which can be done quite easily by making a home gadget. If the tank is 6 inches deep and there is 2 inches of pebbles and 1 inch of sand, the top of the first band of sand must be 3 inches from the top of the pan. The top bar of this leveller, must extend beyond the 2 sides of the pan; the narrower part, an easy fit inside width of pan, and the height of the narrow part, exactly 3 inches in depth. Rest this leveller and lifting out any sand in excess of the 3 inch level or, adding any as the case may on top of both sides of tank, drawing along be.

6. After levelling, draw off excess water by suction. Use small rubber tubing and a small rubber syringe. (This can be done by drawing on tube with mouth, but not very pleasant to get a mouthful of sand!) Insert one end of tube in water in small, empty pot. Apply syringe, free from air at other end of tube and let it create suction by drawing up water. Substitute finger for syringe and lower this end into an empty bowl at a lower level than the pan. Suction is now complete and water will drain off. Place pots, (porous) on top of this 1 inch of sand. (Plants watered in this way, should have only 1 piece of crock, inverted over drainage hole, and on top of that $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of coarse sand.) This makes it so when sold to home grower the plants will have sufficient drainage so they may be either watered from the top or bottom.

7. Press pots very slightly into sand to create contact.

8. Build up on outside of pots partway with sand, flooding and draining off excess water again. This creates a seal about the pots, making damp sand come in direct contact with the outside walls of the pot. (This is called sinking the pots in sand.) The amount they are sunk depends on a number of things. The coarseness of sand used; how porous the pots are; (they vary from different manufacturers) and the dryness of the surrounding air. For instance, when pots were on porch in sheltered spot

in summer, they could merely rest on top of sand. When brought in the house with the steam heat, sinking the pots halfway, was necessary.

9. Water pots well at top to establish capillarity. Check daily and water through empty pot, keeping water level at bottom of this pot or until water starts to enter hole in pot. Do not have water come up any higher, for if the pots sit in water, a chemical reaction sets in which is harmful to the plants.

10. If soil on top of any pot becomes dry, give a good watering from the top to re-establish capillarity.

Note: Having water level exactly 1 inch below bottom of pots is important. A daily watering and checkup for this is essential. How much the pots are sunk in sand depends on individual circumstances. The sand may look damp on top and yet have the water level too low. It has been noted by the writer, that foliage and growth of other plants in the same room, which had heretofore been difficult, has been greatly benefitted. Any plant requiring a fair amount of moisture, will do well with this type of watering. And plants which lost their bloom before due to lack of moisture, (humidity) are now covered with blossoms, with more buds coming.

Harriett F. Lawton

SPORTS OR MUTANTS

Those growing African Violets often hear that such and such a plant is a "sport", and wonder just what a sport is. A "mutant", which is another name for a "sport", is due to mutation, which is a change in chromosome structure that re-

sults in the creation of a new species. The evolution of plant life from the beginning to our present day is largely due to mutation. Mutation is brought about by exposure to shock, heat, cold, electrical discharges, radiation and all the natural agencies that cause plant life to vary. Before man understood this, sports were due to chance, but now we too can, if we wish try our hand at mutation. However, we are discussing not mutation, but the product of mutation in other words "Sports".

Originally, in the United States, the only Saintpaulias grown were blue; then one day, among the blue a new color appeared, was eagerly propagated and distributed, and so on until we now have not only every shade of blue and purple, but orchid, wine, pink and white. Not only the flowers but the leaves have changed, until we have many kinds of foliage.

Seedlings differing radically from the parents, are mutants, provided the difference is not due to cross-pollination. Though natural mutation may occur, roughly speaking, only one to ten in 50,000 plants, still each of us may hope to be the lucky one to find, for instance, the true red African Violet promised us. However, don't expect the elusive "yellow violet" because heredity in plants is determined by the genes contained in the chromosomes within the nuclei of cells, and the genes producing the color yellow are absent from Saintpaulias, though present in some of its distant relatives. If we ever have a yellow African Violet, it will be a hybrid plant, but that is another story.

Submitted by Mrs. Pat J. Crowe,

Rt. 2, Rossville, Ga.

JUST IN BRIEF

By Inquisitive

EXPERTS. An outstanding horticulturist wrote us recently and stated, "While I am interested in African violets - - I do not feel that I am qualified to rate as an expert in their culture." When I read this expression of a really noted expert in the culture of houseplants I truly felt humble, because I am not an expert, yet I am frequently commenting to others on what I believe are sound methods of African violet culture. Perhaps what most of us like best about these splendid houseplants is that they thrive for just plain every-day folks who find pleasure in growing them. So often we see them grown to perfection on the window ledges and porches of lots of folks who are not experts.

MAGIC WORDS. Our Editor wrote me recently. She said, "I receive many letters asking what to do to make African violets bloom. Can you answer this one. I wish I knew the magic words." Well, my experience in growing African violets, insofar as blooming is concerned, adds up to just about this. A plant that does not bloom is either too young, too old, too sick, or is just resting between blooming cycles. Even the very healthiest plants in my collection do not bloom continuously, year in and year out. And though I chafe a bit at times while plants are resting between blooming periods, I know I must allow some time out for their natural resting period. It is while they are resting that I can best en-

joy their excellent leaf patterns and their various forms of growth. Summing all this up, Madam Editor, a healthy plant will bloom periodically throughout the year. Perhaps these are the magic words. Who knows?

POTTING SOIL. While on the subject of bloom I may as well repeat one of my pet themes, in brief. 'Plant African violets right, in good potting soil and they'll bloom for you all along.' A balanced potting soil that certainly works well for me is composed of the following three ingredients in the proportions indicated.

4 - parts well-rotted stable or barnyard manure.

2 - parts rich woods earth or garden loam.

1 - part coarse sand, well-washed.

All of these ingredients are first put through a quarter or eighth inch screen, then thoroughly mixed together. If this mixture is too dry, moisten it a bit before using. An African violet plant seated in this lush potting mixture is just bound to do well and bloom periodically. Your nearest nurseryman or florist should be able to supply you with these ingredients if you live in the city. Of course, if you live in a rural section all of them should be near at hand.

FERTILIZING. If the potting soil is of rich substance additional fertilizing of African violets will not be needed for sometime after they are potted up and start growing off as young plants or as old plants. In rich soil there is sufficient plant food stored up to last for quite a while. But sooner or later, no matter how rich the potting soil is, African violets will need additional feeding. "But when shall I start using fertilizer on them," you may ask. Mr. Ernest Chabot in his new book *Greenhouse Gardening For Everyone* gives this answer. "It is when the plant starts to make vigorous growth that it can stand forcing." By the term forcing, I think he means speeded up in further growth and in bloom. Further he states, "It is a mistake not to feed healthy plants when they need it." But, he also, indicates, that such plants as African violets should always be fed a balanced meal, so to speak, and certainly not too much of that. You will find many well-balanced brands of fertilizers at your favorite seed store. Always follow the directions that come with any type of fertilizer you buy.

PESTS. "What can one do for tiny pinworms that can be seen in the soil. They eat the roots of African violets. I have a lot of trouble with them." Thus writes

a member out in the Hoosier State. We responded. "The description you gave of the tiny pinworms is so meager that I cannot identify it. Nevertheless, I am informed that worm pests in the soil can be destroyed by fumigating it before it is used with Formaldehyde Dust which can be obtained from your nearest seedstore." I also added that she should use the Dust in the manner prescribed by the Manufacturer in directions that come with the package. Come to think of it, I should have also added that another and perhaps a simpler method of destroying insect pests in the soil is to bake it a sufficient length of time either in the stove oven or in a pan over a fire outdoors.

CYCLAMEN MITE. This is the name of one of the most damaging insects that attack African Violets as well as many other indoor and outdoor plants. This insect is so small that it cannot be seen with the naked eye, which makes it all the more subtle and dangerous. One may know when the Mite is attacking because the crown leaves get brittle, thick, distorted and discolored. If you have these indications of the presence of Mites on any of your plants that you feel are worth saving, first separate the ones that are affected, from the rest of your plants. Then dip the affected plants in a 1½ percent solution of Rotenone - - - one tablespoon full of Rotenone to a gallon of water. To dip plant, and this is a vigorous treatment, turn it upside down with the first two fingers of both hands holding the plant and the soil around it firmly in the pot. Then dip the entire plant in the solution. Wash hands thoroughly after dipping procedure is completed. Plants that are quite badly affected had best be destroyed preferably by burning.

SHY BLOOMERS. All varieties of African violets are not super-duper bloomers in the same way as are some of the old reliables such as, Blue Boy, Blue Girl, Mentor Boy, Ionantha and others. The famous and beautiful Dupont strain of African violets is an illustration of what is meant by shy bloomers. Both the lavender pink and the various blue Duponts in my collection are a bit shy on blooming as compared with the other varieties mentioned. But, as one of my neighbors, a lady of excellent taste, put it; "I had rather have one splendid bloom stalk on a Dupont lavender pink—its her favorite—than may bloom stalks on a plant of some other variety." I believe I agree with this lady. Do you?

OTHER SPECIES. Many of us may have come to think that *Saintpaulia ionantha* is the one and only species of African violet. But this is not the case according to the

following descriptive notes that appeared in a recent issue of the *Gardners Chronicle* in England.

"*Saintpaulia diplotricha*. This plant is most easily distinguished from *Saintpaulia ionantha* by the long and short hairs which clothe the leaves, contrasting with the hairs of uniform length found in *Saintpaulia ionantha*."

"*Saintpaulia tonwensis* is also closely allied to *Saintpaulia ionantha*, but has longer, more elliptic leaves with a subacute tip."

"*Saintpaulia obicularis* - - - the upper side of the corolla is almost pure white, but with a deep lavender ring around the cells - - - underside of lobes white, with light crimson middle vein and tips washed with the same color."

"*Saintpaulia grotei* - - - has a creeping stem, rooting at the nodes."

Saintpaulia grotei, though only briefly described, does sound interesting. If anyone has this species in their collection we would like to hear from them.

A HEALTH PROGRAM FOR AFRICAN VIOLETS was the subject of a most interesting and practical talk delivered at the First National African Violet Show in Atlanta, Georgia, October 9-10, by Dr. W. B. Baker, of the Staff of Emory University. Summing up his presentation, Dr. Baker, who is an expert botanist, emphasized that an African violet plant needs the following in order to be healthy.

a. The right kind of food and plenty of it.

b. Proper amount of fresh air - - - and not in drafts.

c. Water - - - not too much - - - not too little.

d. Plenty of sunshine - - - plants properly shaded from direct sunlight.

e. Relative degree of sanitation - - - cleanliness.

PITHY COMMENTS. W. D. Holley of Crowell, Conn., is Chairman of African Violet Society's Classification Committee. He delivered an excellent talk at the recent African Violet Show in Atlanta, which was held in conjunction with the First Annual Meeting of the membership of African Violet Society of America. Among the many fine, pithy comments Mr. Holley made on the culture of African violets were the following.

- - - African violets thrive best in an acid soil. This kind of soil makes much better pinks and blues. It brings out their colors if the light is right.

- - - Never a plant that mutates as much as the African violet. Out of twenty leaf cuttings planted you invariably get variation.

SHOW ATTENDANCE GOOD. In almost a continuous downpour of rain more than 2,500 people paid admission to see the recent African Violet Show in Atlanta, Ga. After the moderate expense of conducting the Show is paid, and the Federal Tax is deducted, the net proceeds will be given to local charities. This was one of the requirements in the contract the Show Committee had with the Municipal authorities in Atlanta in order to obtain the Municipal Auditorium Annex in which the Show was held. Some 150 members from all over the Country attended the Show. I believe the Executive Committee of African Violet Society of America will welcome suggestion from any or all members as to whether the African Violet Show should be conducted by the Society as an Annual Event or as a Semi-annual Event.

WATCH FOR Miss Helen Van Pelt Wilson's new book on "African Violets" soon to be released.

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COVER DESIGN: BLUE VELVET

It has often been said that some Violets
enjoy the enviable distinction of being
beautiful even without flowers, and this is
true of Blue Velvet.

The leaves are a dark, shining, bronze
green, heavily quilted, somewhat heart-
shaped, of medium thickness with serrate
edges, and underneath a deep reddish
purple—they are held well on medium long
red stems.

It is a dependable bloomer, with flowers
of a bright indigo blue, eight to ten blossoms
to the cluster.

Photograph by Sam Truan, Jr.
Knoxville, Tenn.

The Presidents Message

PAST AND FUTURE PROGRESS

Backward and forward looks are appropriate just over the threshold of our second year's history. So, while we are still young as an organization, we should look backward over the past year, our first, to take stock of our progress. Then a forward look to contemplate the manner of progress we should make during the years immediately ahead.

Favorable reports on our first National African Violet Show held in Atlanta, Georgia last October 9-10 continue to reach me. Under the capable leadership of our former first vice president, Mr. C. J. Hudson, Jr.—he was assisted most efficiently by our other members in Atlanta—this first National Show set up a distinctive milestone in our immediate past progress. The next National Show and Annual Convention are now being considered. Plans will be made and announced just as soon as the best City location can be determined. Atlanta has set a standard for both efficiency and widespread interest in African Violets, both in raising and showing them, that will be difficult to measure up to in the future. But our plans for the next Show and Convention must be so carefully timed, measured and executed that even Atlanta's fine record will be exceeded. That is the kind of future progress we are seeking to attain.

Our Classification Committee—Mr. W. D. Holley is the Chairman—has certainly given an excellent account of itself within the very few months it has been tackling a most difficult job. The Committee has already classified and uniformly described a number of different varieties of African Violets and will continue on with its work in the future. Reports of progress made will reach you in future issues of the Magazine.

A Classification on Registration is needed to work side by side with the Classification Committee. Such a Committee on Registration should set up a carefully worked-out plan, a permanent one, through which the known varieties and species of Saintpaulias can be properly registered, by name, with the Society. Through the operation of this kind of program of registration the Society can help prevent the same name being applied to a number of different varieties, and also help prevent a number of different names being applied to the same variety. None of us needs to be reminded. I'm sure, of the confusion that already exists because of duplication of both names and varieties.

Very soon we will also need a Scientific Committee to begin work on the difficult task of accurately discerning the various fundamental characteristics of Saintpaulias. This, our favorite houseplant, needs to be taken into the laboratory by those who have the know-how and skill in order to be properly and adequately explored. It is in this way that the Society can best bring about further improvement in propagation and culture. We need new and better varieties and a Committee of this kind will pave the way for them.

A few more than 600 African Violet enthusiasts and growers, both professional and amateur, joined the Society during the past eight months. Very few of these, our first members, were urged to join. Practically all of them just heard or read about the Society and joined voluntarily and enthusiastically. We have set 1,200 as our membership goal for 1948. It can be easily attained if each of our present members will invite one or more of their friends to join the Society. Everyone interested in African Violets is eligible for membership. No application blank is necessary. A check or money order for \$3 for a year's Individual Membership or \$10 for a year's Sustaining or Commercial Membership, made payable to African Violet Society of America, and sent to the Treasurer, 2694 Lenox Road, Atlanta, Georgia, is all that is required to become enrolled. Will you join me in helping to secure 600 additional members during this new year, 1949.

All officers of the Society join in the good wish that this new year, 1949, will be the very best year for everyone of our members. We will welcome suggestions from any and all members, the adoption of which, will help your African Violet Society to continually serve a higher and higher usefulness.

Cordially,

Your President

Mrs. O. E. Keller

BOTANICAL ANALYSIS OF SAINTPAULIA AND METHOD OF POLLINATION

Excerpt from unpublished manuscript on
Saintpaulias

By: Clarissa Harris

The Saintpaulia (African Violet) is known as a superior type of flower, one that has its ovary within the calyx but not attached thereto. The flower of this plant is also known as a perfect flower. By this we mean a complete flower having both pistalate and staminate parts together in one blossom. These plants are therefore monaecious—both sexes on the same plant.

The Botanical description of this plant is much easier illustrated than described in words, therefore we hope the following drawings will serve to complete the picture.

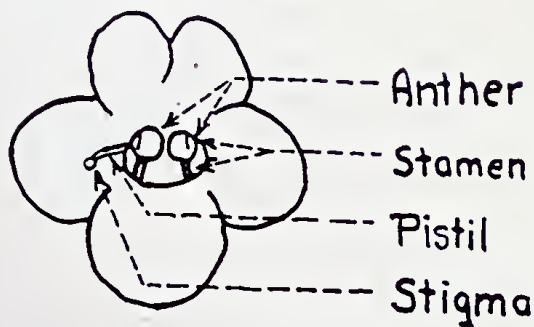


Fig. 1 Front View

Stamen—The pollen-bearing organ which gives rise to the male or fertilizing cell.

Anther—The summit of the stamen containing the pollen or fertilizing dust.

Pistil—The seed bearing organ in the center of the flower. The color of the pistil is governed by the color of the lobes or corolla.

Stigma—The receptive upper part of the pistil on which the pollen which fertilizes is placed.

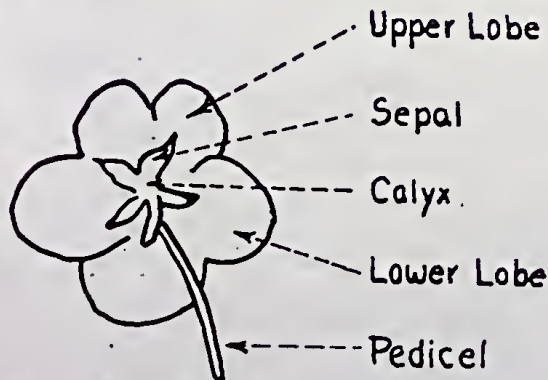


Fig. 2 Back View

Calyx—The whorl of a flower

Pedicel—A short foot stalk

Sepal—One of the leaf like divisions enclosing the corolla of the flower.

Corolla—Consists of upper and lower lobes or petals.

Fig. 3 Detail

1. Calyx and Pistil—This is the fruit shortly after lobes or blossom has fallen off and pollinization has been effective.

2. Tube of Corolla laid open and Stamen. This gives you a picture of the male portion of the flower when in full bloom.

3. Pistil—Here is the female portion of the flower, with the style stripped from the ovary.

4. Transverse section of Ovary—This picture is for the purpose of showing how the seed grains lay in the ovary.

5. Hair of margin of Corolla—A very much magnified drawing of the fine hairs that cover the complete plant.

6. Ovule—Here is shown the ripe pollen released from the stamen sacs or anthers.

7. Immature Fruit

Being a house plant there are no natural means of pollination. No bees or wind to carry the pollen from one plant to the other, therefore hand pollination is essential.

In pollinating there are several important factors to bear in mind—pollen must be healthy and from a strong sturdy plant. Seasons also have a great influence on the pollen. The pollen grains are delicate and must be handled carefully to prevent damage. Mid-day is the most ideal time for pollen to be loosed.

The correct time for cross-pollinating is when the pollen is ripe and will shake loose easily when broken open, and when the stigma is in a receptive state. On very close examination you will see on the stigma a sticky substance. Rupture the top of the anther so that the pollen is free and place the pollen on the stigma. The pollen will adhere readily to the stigma and immediate germination takes place in the sugary secretion on the tip of the stigma, and it proceeds down into the ovary fertilizing the ovules. One grain of pollen will be all that is necessary to fertilize the ovary, but the two important factors are that the pollen from the anther must be ripe and the sugary secretion must appear on the stigma.

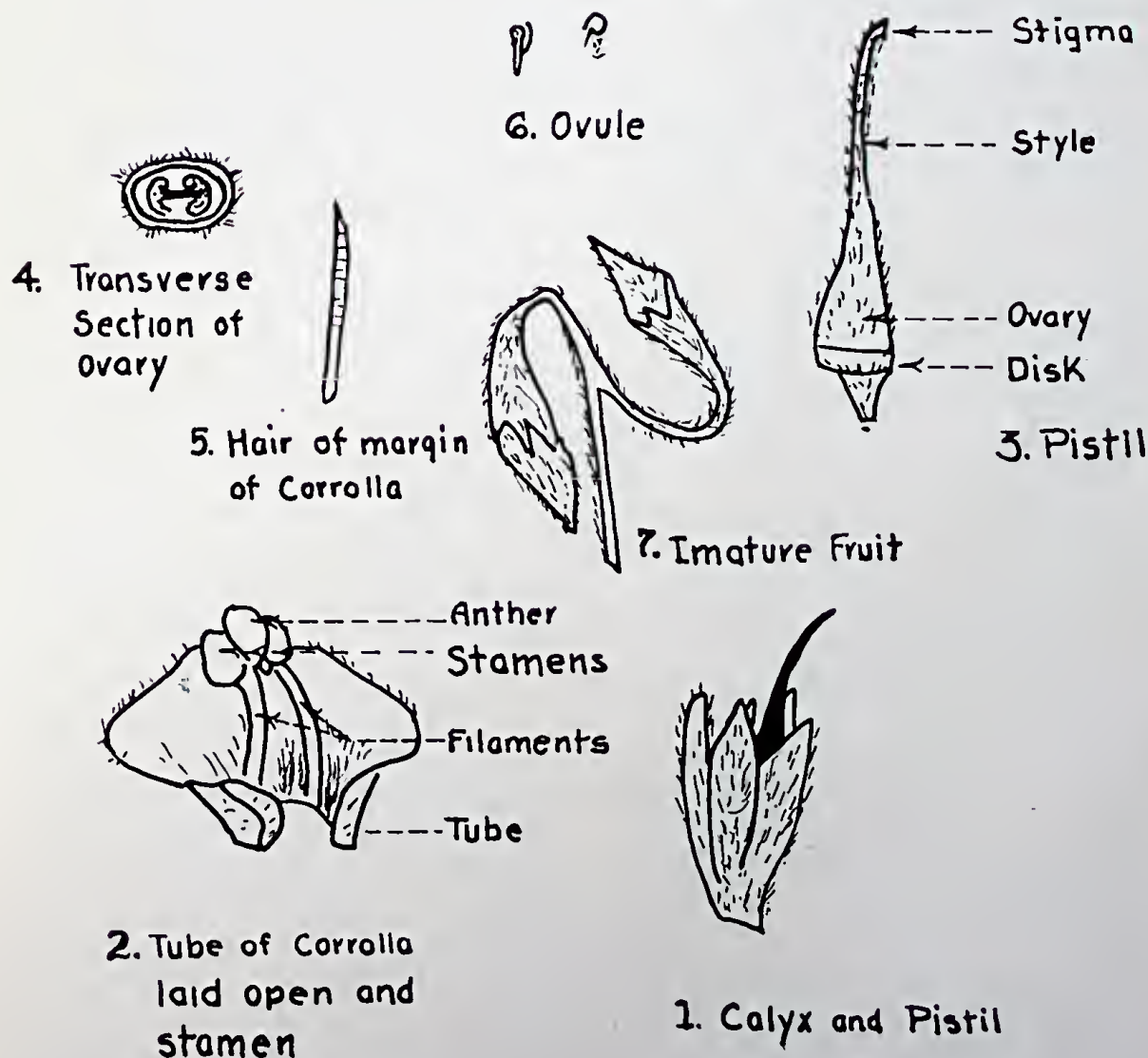
Cross pollination is much more effective than selfed. Seldom if ever will the plants pollinate themselves. The corolla seems to be ready to fall from the plant carrying with it the stamens before they are ripe enough to drop the pollen onto the stigma. It is often necessary to crack the pollen pods with the flick of the finger to release the pollen.

In self pollinating, that is placing the pollen from the same flower on the stigma of the plant, it is not necessary to use the precaution of removing the pollen pods to prevent different pollen being mixed with the cross you wish to make. However, if a cross is desired, it is advisable to remove the stamens immediately after the flower opens and when the stigma is ready for the pollen to bring the desired pollen to it through shaking it onto the plant or a camels hair brush may be used to transmit the pollen to the stigma. Care must be used to not injure the delicate parts of the flower in so doing.

To insure a definite pollination the process of applying the pollen should be repeated two or three days in succession.

After the pollination has taken place then comes the long period of waiting for the seed pods to ripen. If pollinated early in the spring, say May, then the seed ripen rapidly and by September they are well dried and ready to harvest. But if later dates are used then sometimes it seems they will never ripen but do not be faint hearted for they will eventually ripen. However, if sufficient time has elapsed the pods may be removed from the plant and placed on the window ledge to ripen.

Fig. 3



JUST IN BRIEF

By Inquisitive

SUGAR AND SPICE. A column of this kind must be flexible if it is to be continually interesting. So, in the language of an old nursery rhyme, it should be made of "Sugar and spice and everything nice"—about African Violets, of course. Interesting and helpful facts about their culture; a bit about their history from time to time; some helpful experiences of others in growing them; and even some facts about how to destroy the enemies that attack them. All of these factors, and others too, must be blended together to make a pleasing pot pourri of Just In Brief.

HISTORY FIRST THIS TIME. We will start this one with some historical briefs about our favorite and extremely popular Saintpaulia (African Violet). W. D. (Bob) Holley of Cromwell, Connecticut, the genial Chairman of the Classification Committee, has cleared up a historical point that, heretofore, was a bit shrouded in mystery. Concerning the introduction of African Violets into the United States, Mr. Holley writes as follows. "William K. Harris, a florist of Philadelphia who is still living, received two plants (of African Violets) from a Mr. George Stump in 1893. Mr. Stump, now dead, operated a retail florist business at 59th and 5th Avenue, New York City. Mr. Stump brought these plants from Germany after a trip there, and as far as I can learn, they were *S. Ionantha*."

Apparently Mr. Stump actually secured the plants he brought to Mr. Harris in Europe and that either these plants or the ones from which they were taken, originated in Africa. This is verified by the following quotation from the Horticultural World of New York City: "The first form of Saintpaulia, *S. Albescens*, reached Europe in 1889. It was white, tinted blush. *S. Ionantha* from the Usumbara Mountains of East Africa reached Europe later, being first figured in the Botanical Magazine in 1893. Both varieties came from German East Africa."

POPULARITY. Ralph Bailey, an Editor of Home Garden, an excellent magazine, used the following quotation in the October 1947 issue of Home Garden.

Plants, like politics, are best left, and ultimately must be left, to the judgement of the public. If the advocate can make out a good case for his pet plant before the bar of public opinion, the public will listen. If they condemn it—so! They are right. Popular plants

are the best plants. Those who dwell in their little shrines, prostrate before rare exotics, worship false gods.

—F. Kingdom Ward

Mr. Bailey characterized a part of the foregoing quotation as smug. I'm not taking issue with him as to its smugness, but merely citing it as an odd coincidence that a friend sent us this quotation recently, along with an expression of his opinion and the opinion of many of his friends and acquaintances, that . . . "the African Violet is, today, the most popular and widely grown houseplant in the United States." I agree with this friend and believe a public poll would verify its popularity.

HOSPITAL HARDY. A hospital nurse was quoted recently as suggesting that flowers with a heavy fragrance are not suitable for the hospital sick room. Recently a friend who had to spend several weeks in a hospital told us that so many of the beautiful cut flowers, with and without fragrance, her friends sent did not last well under hospital room conditions. While African Violets are without fragrance, they are decidedly 'Hospital Hardy' and are definitely appropriate for the sick room. Give African Violets to sick friends and acquaintances both in hospitals and at home.

VERMICULITE, sold under trade names such as Zonolite, Mica-Grow, Mikamagic and doubtless a number of others, is a rather new yet already well-tried material in which to root African Violet leaf cuttings. This material is manufactured through the operation of a process of heating Mica to the point where it expands, or explodes—as one grower put it—"somewhat like pop corn." Being subjected to such high temperatures Vermiculite is sterile and therefore free of harmful bacteria and fungi. Its most favorable other characteristic as a rooting medium is that because it is so porous it retains moisture for a longer period of time than does the old reliable rooting media, sand and peat moss, or a mixture of the two. An inquirer writes, "Where can I buy this material?" By this time practically all large dealers in seed, fertilizer, nursery supplies etc. sell Vermiculite under one of its many trade names. Ask for it by the name 'Vermiculite' rather than by a trade name.

VITAMIN B1, either alone or when combined with other types of vitamins, is effective in encouraging African Violet leaf cuttings to root quicker and more

vigorously. It also encourages general plant growth. In this connection it should also be stated that Vitamin B1 is not a substitute for well-balanced fertilizer. To put it another way Vitamin B1 may be used to good advantage to supplement the regular diet of African Violets, and some brands of fertilizer accordingly contain Vitamin B1 and other vitamins. One of our members requests information concerning how much Vitamin B1 to use, i. e., to a quart of water, and where it can be purchased. Practically all large and small seed stores, particularly the larger ones, sell Vitamin B1. The packages in which it is sold always carry directions as to its use. Always follow the given directions.

REVERTING TO TYPE. One of our members writes; "I would like to use three different colors (of African Violets) blue, pink and white in a novel dish, to be used for a centerpiece. Will the pink or white or both revert back to blue by being planted together in such close quarters?" We have never heard of a well-developed African Violet plant, one that has already bloomed, changing colors as a result of being planted together in the manner indicated or otherwise. If any of the experts, or anyone else for that matter, disagrees with the "No" we would like to hear from them.

STRAWBERRY JAR. The foregoing question from a member about planting different colored varieties of African Violets in one receptacle reminds us to request someone to try planting a Strawberry Jar, particularly a large one, with the many different colors. The plants should be so arranged in the pockets of the jar as to contrast the different colors and tones. It goes without saying that a Strawberry Jar thus planted will thrive on a well-lighted and enclosed porch, patio or terrace. Anyone having a well-lighted and properly heated porch, solarium, sunroom etc. can also use a planted Strawberry Jar to good advantage in Winter. We would certainly like to hear from anyone who tries this experiment. Write us the results, please.

HURRICANES such as recently swept across parts of the state of Florida wreck great havoc and leave much sorrow and suffering in their wake. If you don't believe it ask Red Cross. In this connection did anyone ever hear that African Violets are hardy to the point of resisting three hurricanes, and that perhaps said hurricanes encouraged African Violets that resisted them to bloom more freely? Well, we have. Mrs. W. F. Broyles, a member in Umatilla Florida wrote us on November 15, 1947 as follows. "I left thirty (African Violet plants) by a lake for five months. They went through three hurricanes, and when I returned they were a mass of blooms, more blooms than I have had be-

fore." We have on various occasions accused Ionantha and Blue Boy of being old rough necks. Now we are justified in our accusations. Have any other members left plants out doors, either in pot or planted in the ground, and with what results? Thank you Mrs. Broyles for relating your interesting experience.

BLACK GNATS. "What can be done to get rid of the little black gnats that fly around my plants?" asks a member from Missouri. We have found one effective method is to paint the outside of the pots with Pestroy. Repeat in 3 weeks if necessary.

THE NAEGELIA

By Ruth M. De Young

Kasson, Minnesota

The Naegelia is a close relative of the African Violet and is one of the many interesting plants of the family Gesneriaceae.

Naegelia Zebrina discolor has beautiful heart-shaped leaves of emerald green overlaid with plum veining. The flowers are bright red above with a yellow throat dotted red. They appear alternately on a stem in a terminal cluster well above the foliage.

Naegelia Cinnabarina has more rounded heart-shaped leaves of dark green overlaid with cinnabar red hairs. The flowers are deeper, duller, red than Zebrina, and a trifle larger. This plant too is neater and of more upright form than zebrina.

Both form pine cone like Rhizomes, somewhat larger than Achimenes. Each tiny division of the pine cone will form plants or leaves and they may be readily rooted in soil or water. Sometimes tiny Rhizomes form in the leaf axils.

Rhizomes may be planted one half inch deep in any rich well-drained soil. Shallow pots and bottom heat gives best results.

These most interesting plants are very easy to grow and the foliage is attractive even without the flowers.

Mention may be made of a few other varieties of:

Gesneriaceae: The Episcia with beautiful, trailing, foliage and bright colored flowers. Streptocarpus, in delicate shades of blue, lavender and rose, with ruffled petals and penciled throats.

Trichosporum, with red wide-open mouthed serpent-appearing flowers.

Isoloma, with soft hairy scalloped leaves edged with brown and most everyone is acquainted with Gloxinias and Achimenes which are much better known.

PROPAGATION-- A NEW SLANT BY A NEW GROWER

By Warren E. J. Gottshall

The Amateur propagates the Saint-paulia for one of four reasons—or all of them—to increase the number of their plants; to increase the number of their varieties; to make available extra plants for sale or gift; or, because they have the “green thumb” and cannot help themselves.

The major requirements for propagation are: (a) the desire, (b) the perseverance to succeed, (c) the necessary materials, and (d) a ready pen. Desire comes sooner or later to everyone who has an African Violet. Perseverance is something you are either born with or must acquire, and, if your case is like my own, it is something really needed. The necessary materials? A plant, an offset (or sucker) or a leaf; some water, a “stimulant,” some peat and sand and vermiculite. The ready pen? Most certainly. It will not be long before you exhaust your friends varieties and by that time the fever has mounted and you must get to work with the pen. It takes a lot of letter writing to find the varieties you want during that process you learn of other varieties and the material is never exhausted. Most certainly a ready pen!

Everyone knows that the African Violet plant is the main propagation source and the true one. However while it is the true source, i. e. for propagating the same variety, sports do occur quite frequently if propagation is done on a large scale (accounting for a number of our good and present varieties). If the plant has several crowns originating below the ground you have a ready supply of plants. Before taking up the plants it is practical to take a sharp knife, insert it between the crowns and cut straight downward—thereby severing the roots and individual plant “trunk.” Continue to give the same care as usual for about a month; after which time the pot can be turned and the plants pushed out. You will find that each crown will then come apart with little effort and practically no disturbance to the roots. Repot each separately, fill in with your usual soil mixture and that is all. Any setback in the plant will be a great deal less noticeable than dumping the pot and pulling the plants away as so much soil is loosened from the roots in this method.

In the case of offsets by “suckering”—they can be removed from the parent plant with a long, thin instrument (something like the long handled and narrow bladed knife used in model building). Then fill a small pot with vermiculite and gently push the newly cut offset into it. A few pot labels placed across the lip of the pot will hold the plant upright and in position

until the roots form to do the job. Water with your usual stimulant solution and B1. (In my case I use Hyponex). Or, the plant can be set in small pebbles in a shallow dish of the stimulant. Roots will grow and the plant even bloom under this condition provided regular feedings are given. When using vermiculite roots will form sufficiently in about two weeks to a month—depending upon the time of year—for the plant to be transferred to an equal mixture of vermiculite, peat and sand. Another month or two in this mixture and your plant is ready for the regular potting soil. The middle phase can be eliminated but you will be rewarded by better and stronger roots if you will but take the time to include it in the procedure.

Leaf cuttings are our most common means of propagation and the one that rewards us with the greatest number of plants for only rarely do we get but one plant per leaf setting—but then if the petiole was cut long enough to begin with the leaf can be used over and over again. Do not break off your stem; cut it with a razor blade or something similarly thin and sharp. In my own case I found it a wise procedure to submerge the stem beneath water containing B1 and then slice off another quarter of an inch of the stem; holding it under water for about a half minute or so. Quite often when a stem is severed from a plant air is drawn into the freshly cut opening and those minute air bubbles can cause a blocking of the feeding veins and start deterioration of the stem or leaf. However, with the second cutting the effected area is removed and water is drawn into the stem. I am not saying that the “healing” method used by a great many propagators is wrong. I am merely giving the method that gives better results for me.

Rooting in water is not just an old fashioned idea for it is quite frequently a good one, especially when used with leaves that have been received through mails and arrive a bit on the droopy side, for it will soon add “starch” or backbone to the stem and leaf in a day or two. It isn't wise to use an old limp leaf from a plant but it can sometimes be given life with the water method when others will merely cause rot and demise of an already tired leaf. Be sure when using the water to add a pinch of food compound. Vermiculite will, on the other hand, usually promote faster and a more extensive root system. With this method fertilizer is also used. There is but one drawback in the use of vermiculite as a rooting media, for, while it encourages

roots, it may in some varieties show a partiality to making roots and overlook the important necessity of starting plants. Treat vermiculite as you do the water by using it as a rooting media mainly; that is, by removing the leaf after the roots have formed then replant it into the Big Three mixture mentioned above (vermiculite, peat and sand). How long should the new plants, when they appear, be left in the Big Three? That is entirely up to you—until separation, or until repotting. When separating, put them back into the same mixture for awhile, no time will be wasted in the growth of the plant, but time will be gained in the developing of the root system.

When to separate? Not before the young plants have reached the ripe old stature of at least an inch and not until the original leaf has been removed. Cut off your leaf as close to the ground as possible. You have probably noticed that a good many leaves will grow in size after they have become rooted so why support this unnecessary growth when this strength can be used to developing the young plants? After allowing about a week or so for "healing" take your knife and cut the plantlets apart in the pot as in the case of multiple crowns above; let stand for a few weeks and then repot individually. Don't, at any time, let your rooting mixture dry out. If you should take up your leaf and plantlets at the same time you may find that the leaf stem only has roots and your young plants do not. However, do not be discouraged, just set them on vermiculite as with "suckers" and give them the usual care.

Should your leaves rooting in water develop plants before you get around to potting, I have found, contrary to all accepted beliefs, that if the plant, roots and stem are buried up to an inch they will produce stronger plants. I have never lost a single leaf by this practice. The growing plant will raise a small mound in the soil which can then be lifted off with the point of a pencil. Just one more precaution; if you do cut a long petiole, don't stick it down two, three or more inches below the top of the soil. Your plant develops at the base of the stem so why give it so far to travel before seeing the light of day? If you repot it with the roots up where they belong your young plant will soon look like a flagpole sitter.

All of this boils down to one thing—the new slant for me is—vermiculite.

AFRICAN VIOLETS: and other choice houseplants. Send stamp for our spring list.

YOARS HOUSEPLANT NURSERY

Bunker Hill, Indiana

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

By R. G. Baxter

There doesn't seem to be any set rule on the growing of African Violets. I think they should be grown the way each individual has the best success.

A good many Commercial Growers are making their leaf cuttings in 2¼ in. pots, instead of flats using a soil with a little more sand in it. These plants become pot bound before there is any leaf growth, therefore the strength has to go into the leaves making a more rapid growth. There seems to be some question if a Violet should be pot bound or moved to a larger pot before it does. Commercial Growers as a rule do not shift their plants until they have become pot bound and do not try to finish a plant and let it bloom until it is pot bound. In order to keep the soil in a good growing condition in a pot, the roots of a plant must be all through the soil or the soil where there are no roots for any length of time will become sour and soggy which could cause root rot. I have even seen plants that were stunted by being over potted. This doesn't mean to leave your plants in one pot forever but when you move them you go from a 2¼ to a 3 inch and from a 3 inch to a 4 and so on taking only one size larger pot at a time. When we wish to finish a 4 inch pot for retail trade it is allowed to get pot bound and the flowers and buds are pinched off until it is pot bound. We figure there will be more flowers per stem and it will be just loaded with bloom.

It is the nature of some varieties of African Violets to side shoot, the branches are what we would call suckers and should be removed as they take the vitality out of a plant. You know you must remove the suckers on your sweet corn and the same principal applies to your African Violet, as these suckers never produce anything.

Tinari Floral Gardens

Saintpaulia Growers and Specialists

Dept. 13

Bethayres, Pa.

Send for descriptive African Violet list
32 varieties available for immediate shipment.

Feasterville, Penn.
December 27, 1947

DEAR FRIENDS:

May I commence my letter, this time, by reminding you of that 'contented and satisfied feeling' you had in partaking of your Christmas feast? For I would so enjoy using that comparison with the grateful appreciation that several out-of-town guests experienced in being entertained during our lively national convention—by two of Atlanta's most gracious hostesses—Mrs. George Rhodes and Mrs. Frederic Beers. Three very prominent people who sampled this real southern hospitality at its best were: Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Holley of Conn. and Miss Marion P. Thomas of New York.

My next subject, I believe, will interest many of you—or else your inquiries have been misleading . . . But, to give this as concisely as possible, may I quote from a pamphlet I have here before me on "PLANT PATENTS, Report No. 1129?"

" . . . the bill provides that any person who invents or discovers a new and distinct variety of plant shall be given by patent an exclusive right to propagate that plant by asexual reproduction; that is, by grafting, budding, cuttings, layering, division and the like, but not by seeds. The bill does not provide for patents upon varieties of plants newly found by plant explorers or others, growing in an uncultivated or wild state."

Still referring to this pamphlet are these definitions. Quote:

"New and distinct varieties fall into 3 classes—sports, mutants, and hybrids.

"In the first class of cases, the sports, the new and distinct variety results from bud variation and not seed variation. A plant or portion of a plant may suddenly assume an appearance or character distinct from that which normally characterizes the variety or species.

"In the second class of cases, the mutants, the new and distinct variety results from seedlings of cross pollenization of species, two varieties, or of a species and a variety. In this case the word "hybrid" is used in its broadest sense.

"All such plants must be asexually reproduced in order to have their identity preserved."

End of quotation

And now—an announcement. Thru the efforts of our Homing Pigeon Department we have had accepted by our Society, a pin. This is a symbol designating that the wearer is a member of either this National organization, or is taking active part



The Homing Pigeon

in a Homing Pigeon 'COVEY' (as Rosa Peters calls our Units). This pin is a small, neat, purplish-blue African Violet flower; made of ceramics and are individually molded. All will be as near identical in size, shape and tint as humanely possible. The pin, itself, is silver with a safety device attached. For all of you that are interested, I suggest that you contact Miss Florence Dolton: Somerton, Philadelphia, Penn. who is selling them at \$1.50 prepaid and insured.

I also wish to state that special designed stationery for Violet and Pigeonite enthusiasts is available, too. One design, a pigeon, was made especially for the members of our correspondence Units. The others? Well, I am only going to tell you enough to make you rather curious and then refer you to the one in charge. They each have a violet cluster, including beautifully shaded foliage, and the blossoms are reproduced exquisitely. You may recognize his work by other sketches that have previously appeared in our Magazine, for he is no other than our contribution artist—Arthur G. Chard: 31 Jefferson St., Haverhill, Mass.

Sorry, but my space is taken, Soooooo, until we all meet again between the covers of this little publication, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Elsie Croasdale Freed
(Conductress)

ADDRESS BY MR. JOHN M. GOOD

Atlanta National African Violet Show

It is a distinct pleasure to be able to witness this splendid exhibition and to take part in the proceedings. You good people of Atlanta are to be commended for the excellent manner in which the Show has been arranged. I know it has called for a tremendous amount of work but the results most assuredly speak highly for your efforts.

First let me state that the Saintpaulia is one of the few house plants that will flower twelve months in the year. No other plant of comparable beauty will come close to this. It is for this reason that the American people are beginning to realize that the Saintpaulia is the finest of all house plants. The interest in and demand for new varieties of merit has taxed the wholesale grower to the limit.

There is a tremendous field for improvement in Violets. New colors are particularly desired. Good reds, pinks, whites and intermediate shades can and will be developed. It has been only a few years since Ionantha was the only type obtainable—we have made considerable progress in a short span of time. One trend that to me is highly undesirable is the dissemination of the many blue varieties—most of which are so similar as to be almost indistinguishable from existing types. Before a new variety is introduced it should be determined that it is an improvement in some manner over existing varieties.

The one outstanding improvement is the new Dupont strain as developed by Mrs. Wm. K. Dupont. This strain is the result of years of selection and is distinctly superior to even the older Dupont Blue and Dupont Lavender Pink. We have observed flowers $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches across and the plants have remarkable vigor. Five or six shades of blue, ranging from very dark to very light, and several shades of lavender pink

have been developed. These new varieties will be available at sometime during 1948.

African Violets, contrary to the views of many, are not difficult to grow. Probably the most common cause for failure is the low humidity of our present day homes. This may be overcome by spraying the foliage with water quite frequently. Always use lukewarm water when watering or spraying the plants. It must be remembered that Violets should never be permitted to become dry and they also do not thrive when overwatered.

We use a soil consisting of $\frac{2}{3}$ clay loam, $\frac{1}{3}$ peat and a little sand. After the plant is established and in a growing condition we feed with a complete liquid fertilizer every five or six weeks. Animal manures and leaf mold may be used but should be thoroughly sterilized before incorporating in the soil mixture.

For the control of insects a regular spray program should be arranged. The prevention of insects is far easier than the cure of the diseased plants. We spray our plants every ten days with a Nicotine solution—one part Nicotine to two hundred parts of lukewarm water. A little soap or spreader should be added to give increased coverage. This program will completely control the following insects—mites, thrips and mealy bugs.

One very injurious insect is the root nematode. This may be controlled by sterilizing the soil, at a temperature of 200 degrees for one hour. An alternative method of control is by saturating the soil with a formaldehyde solution. Old flower pots should be sterilized at the same time as the soil. Probably the easiest method of sterilizing soil for the individual is to saturate with boiling water. This is equally as efficient as steam sterilization and far less difficult to do.

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(standardized, purplish-blue ceramic flower) are available at only \$1.50 prepaid, and insured. Contact:

Miss Florence Dolton: Somerton, Philadelphia, Penna.

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4 distinctly different corner designs in boxed, Acceptance Bond.

50 sheets, size $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$; \$1.50 prepaid.

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Haverhill, Mass.

SODIUM SELENATE for controlling
Mites, Mealybug, Thrips
on your African violets

Begonias and other house plants.

Water it in—Let the plants
kill their own bugs

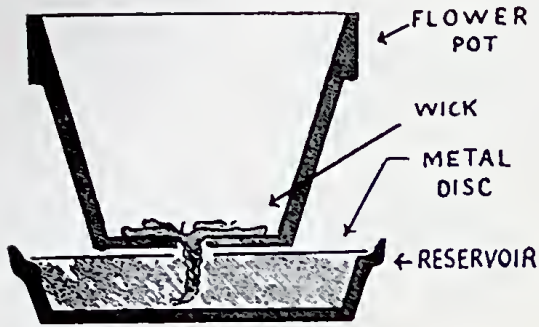
Enough to treat 12 to 20 plants
with full directions

\$1.00 postpaid

W. D. Holley

Cromwell, Conn.

WICK-WATERING WITH GLASWIK



By Carolyn K. Rector

(Illustration by Arthur Chard)

Wick watering is not so very new. It has been the subject of experiments for some time. I have tried out several methods, none of which was entirely satisfactory. One of the best known in this part of the country is done by means of an elaborate and rather costly three-piece pottery set sold for that purpose. It works fairly well under certain conditions, using a porous pottery wick, but in many cases keeps the plant too wet, and there is no way of regulating the amount of water supplied to the plant.

With Glaswik this is very simple. A length of Glaswik consists of about six strands of glass yarn in a loose twist, surrounded by a loosely woven fabric of the same material. It comes by the foot. One cuts off a piece about four inches long, using ordinary scissors. However, this depends on what kind of water container is to be used. The piece of Glaswik must be long enough to allow at least an inch inside the pot, and still touch the bottom of the water container when the plant is set upon it.

The size of the strand used depends on the size of the pot, and the plant to be put in it. For a tiny plant just starting, in say a two-inch pot, I use a single strand. Looking at the end of your cut piece of Glaswik, you will see the ends of the strands inside of the woven cylinder. Pull two of them out. Wind one of them around two fingers, and tie the tip of the other strand around it in a single knot. Slip the free end through the drainage hole in the pot from the inside, so that the knot will keep the strand from coming out entirely, and then proceed to put the soil and the plant in the pot in the usual manner. I usually stand small pots of this size in an ordinary small jelly glass. Put water in the glass until it comes almost but not quite to the bottom of the pot.

For a three inch pot I use a two-strand wick, in which case I tie the knot strand around the end of the wick strand. For larger plants in larger pots, the Glaswik can be used in its original form with all six strands intact in the woven covering. In this case, instead of tying a knot in the wick, after slipping it through the hole in the pot, it is necessary to tear out the end inside the pot till it will flatten out all around the drainage hole.

For plants in four inch or larger pots the company which sold the Glaswik used to sell also a glass dish like a saucer, about two inches deep, with a metal framework which fitted over it to set the pot on, but they have now discontinued the sale of the glass dishes, and I am at present using small glass dishes sold by poultry supply houses for watering baby chicks, called Mason jar Fountain bases. These will serve the purpose fairly well if turned upside down.

Glaswik can be used for watering seed flats also. For each square foot of the bottom of the flat make a half-inch hole. Cut the wick long enough to reach the bottom of the container which is to hold the water, and allow four inches to spread out flat on the inside of the flat, under the soil. Remember that the wick must always touch the bottom of the container.

This is an ideal way to water plants if one wishes to be away for weekends, or vacations, or is too busy to water the plants every day.

In growing Saintpaulias by this method I have found it a good idea to let the water container remain empty about once a week or so until the soil around the plant looks quite dry on the surface. Of course the plant should not be allowed to remain dry long enough to wilt, but letting it dry out occasionally will prevent any danger of crown rot. Even with plants not subject to crown rot it is a good idea to let them dry out once in awhile.

This method of watering prevents the packing of the top soil around plants, and in the case of seedlings, keeps them from being uncovered or washed out by watering.

It is several months since I bought any of this wicking, but the No. 2 size, which I consider the best for general purposes, used to cost 17 cents per foot. It used to be necessary to send to the manufacturer for it, but I have been informed that it is now possible to buy it in hardware stores and from the larger mail order firms.

HAVING TROUBLE WITH YOUR AFRICAN VIOLETS?

Here's How They Grow In Their Native Land.

By Evan Roberts

Reprinted from Glass & Garden
Ann Arbor, Michigan

In the part of Africa near where Stanley met Dr. Livingston, where Mt. Kilimanjaro towers 19,000 feet to be Africa's highest peak, where Lake Victoria, the source of the Nile, originates and where the world's newest diamond mine is located, you will find the home of the African violet. In the territory which used to be known as German East Africa and is now called Tanganyika Territory by its present owners, the English, some 6 to 9 species of African violets grow as they did perhaps tens of thousands of years ago.

The main center of distribution of the African violet is in northeast Tanganyika Territory. This region is bounded by the East Usambara mountains with the limestone foothills just north of Tanga, the West Usambara mountains which are mostly gneissic, and the Chyula Hills of gneissic and volcano composition. The Chyula Hills are just north of the eastern end of the Kenya-Tanganyika boundary. There they may be found growing amongst moist rocks

and rock faces in deep shade regardless of direction. The best plants are growing in the deep shade of evergreen rain forests and in mist forests which receive an average rainfall of from 65-85 inches a year with no prolonged dry season. The rainfall varies from about 35 to 90 inches in a year. The air has a high moisture content with a relative humidity of 75 percent. The shade temperature is never below 50 degrees F. or above 100 degrees F. and the average is from 70 to 80 degrees F.

Mr. P. J. Greenway, botanist of the East African region, suggests that:—"they may be successfully grown in pots or pans three-quarters full of brick or hard rock rubble topped up with a mixture of leaf mold, coarse silver sand or grit, with some rock or brick chips one-quarter to one-half inch in size mixed in. A little bonemeal is beneficial. Also an occasional watering with farm yard manure is good. They may be watered 2 or 3 times a day with a mist spray about 70 degrees F. and should be grown in a temperature of 65-75 degrees F. The roots and leaves will stand water but the former must never be saturated but have free drainage. Shade is essential but not too dense, otherwise they will not bloom freely."



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Winner of the Envious Title "Best in the Show"
(National Show, held in Atlanta, 1947)

BEATING THE WINTER SOLSTICE

The sun moves around South in November and December. The window that was good during the summer fails in the winter. Get all the sun you can. Watch the humidity. Keep your plants blooming for Christmas.

HUMIDITY

How humid is a humid atmosphere? How high is a high humidity? I say 50% to 60% relative humidity is ideal for mature plants, with 40% to 70% the extreme tolerance range. I think young plants want 10% higher humidity than mature ones, and leaf cuttings want another 10% more. You can buy a direct reading hygrometer for a dollar and a half, which can be accurate enough for practical use if proper precautions are taken.

SUPPLEMENTARY ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

Every winter, there comes a long succession of cloudy days, which stops the formation of buds on the plants. In desperation, we try to substitute for the sunshine artificial light. I am exposing my plants to about two hours of electric light of about 200 foot candles intensity every day that the sun does not shine. I get that intensity by using two 150 watt "projector spot" lights focused on a table 13"x32", holding six to eight plants. The lights were about five feet above the table. Two hundred foot candles, or ten times as much, but the diffused clouded daylight is about 20 foot candles, or one tenth as much. There is a lot of heat in the electric light, and you focus or concentrate the heat just like you do the light. My two hundred foot candles raises the temperature about ten degrees, and reduces the humidity about five per cent. This is about all I dare to give it, and that is what limits the amount of light I have so far dared to use. All I

can say is that the artificial light does not seem to hurt mature plants. Do not try this on young plants.

OLD AGE IN VIOLETS

How old can a Violet get and still be a good bloomer. All I know is that three year old plants are still getting better! How often should you repot? When the crown gets bare and turns into a crooked-like stalk, score the sides of the bare stem, cover the scars with rootone and plant deeper, so roots can start from the previously bare stem. Old Violets are more touchy than young ones and require different and more careful handling—less humidity and (I believe) a little more sun. Contrary to the general run, it seems that the White Lady gets sturdier and tougher as it gets older.

SUCKERS

Cut 'em off quick. Don't let them develop into multiple crowns. According to my prejudiced idea, every time you have to divide a plant because it has developed a multiple crown, you admit poor care of the plant—to have let the multiple crown develop. If you want new plants, start leaves.

LEAVES

I have never seen what seemed to me an adequate discussion of what causes defects in leaves. Cold weather will do it. Drafts through cracks in windows during the winter are fruitful sources of difficulty. Too much sun causes leaf defects—and the worst of it is that the right amount of sun to produce copious flowers is often sufficient to spoil a good percentage of the leaves. Plants crowded together so that the leaves of one, rub on the leaves of another causes trouble.

Editors Note: later correspondence advises using extreme caution in the use of supplementary artificial light.

AFRICAN VIOLETS!

Double-flowering DUCHESS is truly double! Has 10-17 deep blue petals and many more unfurled. Large plants \$2.50.

BLUE GIRL SUPREME, has giant sized flowers, \$2.50 each.

ROSY-BLUE; the flowers open maroon-wine and change to orchid-rose. \$2.00 each. Or, all three varieties, labeled, for \$6.00 postpaid.

"F-1 Hybrids"—New seedlings, vigorous, ready to bloom, undivided plants. Temptingly different, as new as tomorrow. \$3.00 each.

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"Quality Plants . . . Quality Packing"

MIRACLE

(To My Sister, Alma Phelps)

It's no small wonder that a fragile flower
Gathers beauty from each shining hour,
Shedding fragrance like the heart of Her
Who watches breathlessly buds and leaflets
stir.

She counts no labor lost, . . . no toil
Too great; imbedding roots into the soil—
Unfolding miracle of Beauty's birth—
Love unspringing from the haloed earth.
God bless the hand of Her who loves so
much

The Violet that seems to smile at Her
touch;

God bless the hands of Her who blends
Love and Beauty in Home . . .
And Flowers, . . . and Friends!

—Clara Smith Reber

CLUB NEWS

FLINT VIOLET CLUB NEWS

The Flint African Violet Society, organized May 29, 1946, with the Ionantha Grandiflora and Kwensis Chapters, participated for the first time in the Flint Yard and Garden Club Flower show at the Industrial Mutual Association Auditorium in Flint, Michigan, September 6th and 7th.

All members of both Chapters collaborated in arranging a very interesting and attractive display of some 30 varieties in white, pink, shades of blue, orchid and red African Violets. Adding unusual interest to the exhibit was a center piece depicting the African Violet growing in its natural habitat, in rich soil among the rocks and in rock crevices, along with an illustration of the process of propagation of the plants from leaf cuttings or seeds in micra-gro, soil or water.

In keeping with the prominent space allotted our exhibit in the auditorium, the entire display was enclosed with a white picket fence cleverly arranged to lend distinction to the setting. This fence by the way served a dual purpose in that it also protected the plants themselves from handling by over-enthusiastic spectators.

Over 16,000 people visited the two-day show, and judging from the interest in our exhibit, we considered it a great success. In view of the popularity of the African Violet as a house plant in this town it is hoped that sometime in the not too distant future it will be possible to have our own little show of African Violets exclusively.

Committee in Charge

Mrs. Helen Larson, Chairman
Mrs. A. Bramm Kwensis
Mrs. J. Tippet Ionantha Grandiflora

RICHMOND CLUB

It is with pleasure we hear of the formation of a club in Richmond, Indiana. Mrs. Mary Mutchner is President, Miss Pearl Fitzsimmons is Secretary and Treasurer.

KNOXVILLE EXHIBIT

Plans have been made by the Knoxville Saintpaulia Society for an exhibit to be held at the Green Room of the Y. W. C. A., April 8, 1948, from 1 P. M. until 9 P. M.

DAYTON MEETING

On January 25, 1948, the Dayton, Ohio, African Violet Society held an open meeting at the Y. W. C. A., with the Society from Richmond, Indiana, as guests. Over 100 members and guests were present. Mr. John W. Good of Springfield, Ohio, 2nd Vice-President of the National Society, was speaker. Officers for the Dayton, Ohio, Society are Mrs. L. K. Booher, President, Mrs. Mary Swceney, Vice-President, Mrs. Nelle Berst, Secretary-Treasurer.

NEWS HERE AND THERE

The Omaha African Violet Club, Inc., will sponsor the Midwest African Violet Exhibit to be held at Joslyn Memorial, 22nd and Dodge Streets, the weekend of April 24th and 25th.

The show will be open to the public, admission free.

Members of the African Violet Society of America, Inc., are invited to enter displays, the deadline for Commercial Growers reservation is March 21st, and for individuals March 24th. Sweepstakes prize will be a Gold Trophy Cup, courtesy of the R. G. Baxter's of Youngstown, Ohio. Tinari Floral Gardens will donate one of the prizes, the new book African Violets will be another. There will be enough worthwhile prizes for members to make the show interesting.

The point system used at the National Show in Atlanta will be used. Qualified judges will be in charge of the judging, merit of plant or display entered will be only consideration of judges.

Schedule covering requirements will be mailed to any member of the African Violet Society of America, Inc., caring to enter. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for prompt reply, and write to Omaha African Violet Club, Inc., P. O. Box 1748, Omaha 4, Nebr.

GREENEVILLE SHOW

The Violet Group in Greeneville, S. C., wish to extend an invitation to all Violet lovers to attend their show on Saturday, April 17, from 1 P.M. until 9 P.M. Members of the National Society may exhibit plants. Plants must be entered by 11 A.M. on the day of the Show, and cannot be removed until after 9 P.M. For further information, contact Mrs. M. R. Pickler, 109 Wilderness Lane, Greeneville, S. C.

SODIUM SELENATE

By Alta H. Decker

Sodium Selenate, a comparatively new soil treatment, seems to have come to stay. When properly applied to the soil in accurate proportions (1 pound will treat close to 2,000 square feet of bench soil for the average greenhouse flowers). It is absorbed by the tissues of the growing plant and kills the insects, etc., which feast on the foliage. It especially kills cyclamen mites, red spider, aphids, midge and nematodes which damage the foliage.

Sodium Selenate is deadly poisonous to people, animals and plants. Different types of plants will absorb different amounts without injury. This preparation is not recommended for use in the home where small children live and are liable to handle the soil or pluck the leaves of treated plants. Toddlers are very apt to put their hands into their mouths after playing in the "dirt" or even eat the plant leaves. One never knows just what the best-behaved children will do, so it just isn't safe to use poison and endanger their lives. Other treatments are effective for a small number of plants in the home. Commercially the merits of Sodium Selenate are very high. Soil which has been treated with this poison is not safe to use for growing vegetable plants intended for animal or human consumption for about six months.

For African Violet treatment, a grower friend suggests that we dissolve one ounce of Sodium Selenate in 50 to 60 gallons of water and water 4" pots twice, two weeks apart, with 3 ounces of the solution poured into the saucer each time. This solution will damage the foliage and must be washed off with a spray of clear water immediately, if accidents occur. Application every 12 to 15 weeks, or approximately three times a year is sufficient to keep on the safe side. Violets which have been transplanted should not be treated until the soil is settled in the pots and they are well established. Wait at least a month. The amount used on other size pots can be gauged by the above proportions. The safest method is to treat only a few plants at first. Use some of which you have duplicates. If they can take it, well, it is safe then for the rest.

The dry form P40, which is 2% Sodium Selenate and the balance Superphosphate, is used extensively by commercial growers of bench flower crops between the rows of established plants at the rate of 3 pounds per 100 square feet of bench space when the foliage is dry. I have no information on its use for African Violets since most growers use pots entirely for their propagation.

As a safety measure, don't wait until your plants are infested. Treat them regularly. A little prevention is the best insurance you can buy and is so much simpler and more profitable than any cure in my estimation, as leaves from mite-infested plants should never be used for propagation.

Saintpaulia Expert ? ? ?

By M. P. P.

I've often dreamed how nice t'would be . . . If the builder of a better mouse-trap could be "me" . . . Or anything to gain more fame . . . So all would come to know my name . . . But now I see the cost of such . . . I do not like it quite so much . . . It started with a small collection . . . That grew and grew in my affection . . . A Saintpaulia added here and there . . . Until I had a group quite rare . . . And then the news began to travel . . . Problems grew to be unraveled . . . I learned for fame we pay a price . . . As people sought my sage advice . . . They came from east and from the west . . . To ask which methods are the best . . . Do you water from top or from the bottom . . . Do you start in water or just pot 'em . . . How long does it take to make them bloom . . . Is it best to start in May or June . . . Do you water with hot or with cold . . . Which is best, a new plant or old . . . What makes mine twist and spot and curl . . . Where can I buy a true Blue Girl . . . Do you have the yellow or double pink . . . Don't you think egg shells make 'em "stink" . . . What fertilizer do you use . . . Until I nearly blew a fuse . . . Folk came morning, noon and night . . . They came at lunch—it was a sight . . . My telephone rang all the day . . . As I talked and frittered my time away . . . The postman brought letters from here and there . . . I struggled to answer . . . 'Til I had no strength to care . . . My desire for fame has long since vanished . . . As my family complain that they are famished . . . They wonder if from meal preparation . . . I've embarked upon a long vacation . . . Tho' I love my Violets dear 'tis true . . . Still have I other work to do . . . So thus I end my quest for glory . . . And this is the end of a sad Violet story. . .

Editors Note: How true!! How true!

The thought expressed in this story in verse needs no further explanation. . . .

WE BUILD A GREENHOUSE

Boyce M. Edens

I did not build it myself, assisted by Mrs. E. attired in slacks with a multi-colored kerchief becomingly knotted about her head. That's the way it is usually pictured in the magazine ads and greenhouse catalogs. For personal reasons I had to forego the satisfaction of thus participating in a really exciting venture. So, according to carefully-worked-out plans, we employed the various skills and crafts necessary in its erection from pouring the concrete footings on which the slag block foundation is built, to erecting the benches and shelves that will henceforth contain our collection of plants from the time they are rooted until they bloom for us in greenhouse perfection.

Our greenhouse is a snug little trick and we are proud of it. No more will our plants monopolize the window ledges, shelves, tables and other bright spots in our home; overflowing into the garage windows and the playhouse doorways. There's room now for growing from 1,500 to 2,000 plants of varying sizes, and we can grow away to our hearts content. It was completed, if a family-size greenhouse is ever completed, well in advance of cold weather and we immediately moved in and set up shop, so to speak. Every inch of bench and shelf space will be devoted to growing African Violets just as we had long planned to do.

We named it Chantreyland and its in a harmonious spot just outside the dining room, a bit to one side of our home where there is ample shade from large white oak trees nearby. It is a prefab type with inside dimensions of 9' x 18'. The two side benches are each about 2'x10" x 17'-2". It is heated by two gas heaters that have the throttling type of thermostatic control.

There are three roof ventilators that are worked automatically by thermostatic control. Both hot and cold water taps are installed against the rear foundation wall in a convenient spot, with a shallow brick and cement sink for washing pots, for other essential tasks that require water, and for draining away excess water from the benches. The center aisle is paved with random flagstones, set in sand and edged with brick.

Light green shading is stippled on the inside of both the roof and side glass walls. It will last almost indefinitely this way. We are convinced that light green shading, instead of the usual white with

its sun glare, is superior because it adds appreciably to the prevention of leaf fading, and thus brings out more of the beauty of both foliage and bloom coloring. Electric drop lights, properly shaded and placed at prescribed intervals above the benches, and at proper height from the tops of the plants in the benches, will permit experimentation later on with the Long Day Treatment of African Violet plants that are being grown off during the short days of Winter.

Most of the facilities thus far enumerated are doubtless well-known to many amateur greenhouse fans and enthusiasts as well as to professional growers. But our plan of watering plants from the bottom may not be so well known. It consists of eight galvanized metal pans, coated inside with acid resistant lacquer, that are built to fit inside both benches. A short drain pipe is in one corner of each pan, and these are connected by hose with a proper size galvanized metal gutter underneath the benches, through which excess water released from the pans drains off through the sink and into the sewer outside. A rubber stopper for each drain pipe is provided to enable the retention of water in the pans as long as is desirable.

Adequate drainage, as well as adequate moisture at all times, is a must for the benches, so about 3½" of clean roofing gravel is placed in each of the pans. Pots containing the plants are well seated in the gravel. Warm water, at proper intervals, is run into the pans up to about an inch from the tops of pots, and allowed to remain until soil surfaces in the pots indicate sufficient moisture through capillary action. The water is then drained off from the pans in the manner already indicated.

We are having a grand time growing, exclusively, the new and better varieties of African Violets. Perhaps the good angels that dwell in the realm of mutata, where ever that is, will smile and a new variety may appear in the benches of our greenhouse now and then. We also plan to do some hybridizing all along hoping to produce some new varieties in this way. Space permitting, we will gladly tell you about anything worth while that may grow out of our future experiences in Chantreyland.

AFRICAN VIOLETS FROM SEEDS

By Mrs. E. M. Fonbuena

For those of you who would like to increase your African Violet collection by growing seedlings, my experiences can be of help.

On March 28 I planted a \$1 package of seeds, which I purchased from a grower. I used a 6-inch pot, with drainage of broken pots, filled to within an inch of the top with vermiculite. Over this I sprinkled the very fine seeds and pressed them down gently, using the bottom of a fruit jar. I did not cover them with vermiculite. Pressing them down is sufficient. I then set the pot into a pan of warm water until all the vermiculite became wet. The pot was then placed in a light but not sunny window and covered with clear window glass. At the end of three weeks several hundred tiny green leaves appeared. Four weeks later I started transplanting. I used a 12-inch clay saucer, broken pieces of pots for drainage, with a 2-inch pot in the center for watering. I filled the saucer with fine sand mixed with vermiculite. Since the plants were very small and so closely grown, it was impossible to separate them all. Some were just transplanted in little clumps. In this one saucer I put about 200 seedlings. I started watering with Vitamin B solution. As the soil held moisture well, I did not water too often for fear of dampening off. After five months from planting I have not lost one plant from dampening off.

One month later I transplanted for the second time. By this time I could separate most of the plants. I planted them separately in two inch pots. In some pots I

put as many as three small plants. The soil I used this time was the regular mixture I used for large plants. I also gave them a little plant food after this transplanting.

Today some plants measure 3 to 4 in. across, while others are still small.

There is quite a bit of individuality shown in these small plants. Some leaves are pointed, some round. Some stems are transparent, some pinkish. Some leaves are very dark green, some light.

It's a wonderful surprise when the plants start blooming, as you never know until they do what they will be. I have several more months to wait to enjoy the surprises. I hope by Christmas, at least, to have blooms. Some growers claim to have blooms within six months, but I don't believe I will be that lucky.

I have between 80 and 90 varieties of African Violets, besides my seedlings. Consequently, I will not have space to start more seedlings until spring.

The demand is always much greater than the supply. Now is the best time to purchase or order, as the seeds will be ready for shipment in October.

There will be some special crosses of seeds available. You will know which varieties are crossed, and order accordingly. Special crosses sell for two and three dollars per package. Each package contains approximately 800 seeds.

I am sure all of them do not germinate, as I did not get more than 300 plants from my seeds.

This should not be at all difficult to any one accustomed to handling seedlings.

Nov 18 '53